Bengaluru Thursday, July 2, 2026 Pages 18 Vol 79 No 182 ₹7

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DH

DECCAN HERALD

The Power of Good

US, Iran enter technical talks to secure deal

Very good meetings happening in Doha, says Trump

Page 11

World

Village People singer Victor Willis dies at 74 P.11

State

Ram Madhav held secret meetings with Pak: Hariprasad P.3A

Business

Factory growth lowest in 4 years P.12

Nation

Russia begins importing fuel from India P.10

Quickly

GST collections rise 11.2%

Net revenue collection from GST rose by 11.2% to Rs 1.62 lakh crore in June, driven by robust mop-up from imports even as domestic collections remained subdued.
Details on Page 12

JPC to submit report on Bill to remove ministers

A Joint Parliamentary Committee, appointed to examine the Constitutional Amendment Bill, which aims to remove ministers, including the PM, after 30 days in custody, is set to submit its report ahead of the Monsoon Session.
Details on Page 6

Trump defends $1.2 bn crypto earnings

US President Donald Trump defended earning $1.2 billion from his family's cryptocurrency business, saying "everybody's profiting" during his tenure.
Details on Page 11

Bribe row hits TN politics

The ruling TVK in Tamil Nadu has accused DMK's V Senthil Balaji of trying to lure one of its MLAs by offering Rs 35 crore through his accomplices.
Details on Page 7

3 killed as heavy rain triggers wall collapse in M'luru

Red alert for coast; holiday declared for schools, colleges

NAINA J A
MANGALURU, DHNS

Three people, including two children, were killed after a compound wall collapsed onto rented houses in the early hours of Wednesday following heavy rain at Naguri in Mangaluru in Dakshina Kannada district, where a red alert has been issued for Thursday.

Besides Dakshina Kannada, where the district administration has declared a holiday for schools, anganwadi centres and pre-university colleges on Thursday, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a red alert for Udupi and Uttara Kannada too.

The deceased in the wall collapse have been identified as Shantha (46), a native of Paniyoor in Udupi district, and Anamika Chowrasiya (8) and Tanu Chowrasiya (4), who hailed from Rudrapura village in Kateya taluk of Gopalganj district in Bihar.

The children's mother, Indu Devi (34), along with her daughters Alka Chowrasiya (14) and Anushka Chowrasiya (11), and Shantha's husband Balakrishna (48), who were trapped under the debris, were rescued.

The incident occurred between 4.30 am and 5 am when the compound wall collapsed following incessant rainfall.

The southwest monsoon intensified over coastal Karnataka and Malnad, while it was normal over South Interior Karnataka and weak over North Interior Karnataka on Wednesday.

Rainfall occurred at most places across coastal Karnataka. Mulki in Dakshina Kannada recorded the highest rainfall of 260 mm, followed by Manki in Uttara Kannada with 210 mm during the 24-hour period ending at 8.30 am on Wednesday.

A yellow alert has been issued for Belagavi, Dharwad, Haveri, Shivamogga, Chikkamagaluru, Hassan and Kodagu. The coastal districts will remain under an orange alert on July 3 and 4, and a red alert on July 5.

According to the IMD, widespread rainfall is likely over coastal Karnataka until July 7. North Interior Karnataka and South Interior Karnataka are likely to receive fairly widespread rainfall on July 2, scattered rainfall from July 3 to 5, and fairly widespread rainfall again on July 6 and 7.
▸ Rain, Page 3A

Firemen rescue a girl from the collapsed house in Naguri in Mangaluru on Wednesday. DH PHOTO

RAINFALL RECORD

Mulki	260 mm
Manki	210 mm
Kilpady	171 mm
Bala	145.5 mm
Pandeshwar	140 mm
Surathkal	132.2 mm
Yekkaru	130.5 mm

Average **67.3 mm** Dakshina Kannada

Rain spread worst in 150 yrs: Dy CM

The monsoon lag this year is the worst in 150 years, said Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara in Belagavi on Wednesday. He added that the government had prepared an action plan to tackle the crisis.
Details on Page 5

Biggest theft in Ram temple during Maha Kumbh: Officials

Fresh raids lead to recovery of donation box with QR code

SANJAY PANDEY
LUCKNOW, DHNS

The investigation into the alleged theft of donations from the Ram temple in Ayodhya has taken a new turn, with the officials claiming that major irregularities may have occurred during the Maha Kumbh Mela in 2025.

The officials said that the unprecedented surge in offerings during the Kumbh Mela was exploited by those involved in the scam.

Meanwhile, the SIT has reportedly recovered a box containing a QR code and a sticker of 'Ramrajya Kosh' (Treasury for Lord Ram's rule) from a yoga centre reportedly operated by the brother of Avinash Shukla, who was among those arrested in connection with the alleged embezzlement. Earlier, Rs 5 lakh was recovered from his residence.

Investigators believe the recovered 'Ramrajya Kosh' chest could prove to be key evidence in establishing the alleged modus operandi and identifying everyone involved before the SIT submits its findings to the court.

Millions of devotees had thronged Ayodhya for the Maha Kumbh.

Sources said that although the 'embezzlement' had been going on for several months, the largest 'theft' occurred during the Maha Kumbh in 2025.
▸ Ram temple, Page 3A

Devotees at the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj. PTI FILE

K'taka MLA collected money: Activist

Social activist Deepak Patil has said that he wrote a letter to the Uttar Pradesh SIT accusing Aurad BJP MLA Prabhu Chavan, VHP leader Gopalji and his associate Satish Naubade of collecting huge amounts of money from contractors in the name of the Ram temple. However, the probe team has not yet acknowledged receipt of his letter. Page 3A

Commercial LPG, ATF cheaper; Nayara cuts fuel rates

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Commercial LPG and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices were reduced on Wednesday following a decline in international oil prices amid easing tensions in West Asia. Private retailer Nayara Energy became the first fuel marketer in more than two years to cut petrol and diesel prices at the pump.

Oil marketing companies slashed the price of commercial LPG by Rs 183.50 per 19-kg cylinder—the first reduction this year. The new price stands at Rs 2,930 per cylinder, down from a record high of Rs 3,113 last month. The price of 5-kg Free Trade LPG (FTL) cylinders was also lowered by Rs 13 to Rs 808.50.

However, prices of domestic 14.2-kg LPG cylinders remained unchanged at Rs 942. ATF prices were cut by around Rs 5 per litre.

This marks the first reduction since prices spiked due to the West Asia conflict. Nayara reduced petrol prices by Rs 5 per litre and diesel by Rs 3 per litre across its network.

Halt WhatsApp username rollout: Govt to Meta

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Centre on Wednesday issued a formal notice to Meta, directing it not to roll out the proposed username for WhatsApps until consultations on security risks.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has given Meta three days to submit a detailed explanation of the feature, including its technical safeguards, rollout plans, and risk mitigation measures.

The notice also asks the company to explain why action should not be initiated against it under the IT Act and its associated rules.

According to the government, the feature — which allows users to chat without revealing their phone numbers — could significantly increase online fraud, phishing, digital arrest scams, and impersonation attacks. It may enable bad actors to create usernames resembling those of government agencies, public authorities, financial institutions, and prominent individuals, thereby facilitating identity spoofing and deception.

The Ministry reminded Meta that it must comply with due diligence obligations under the IT Act and Rules. It has explicitly directed the company, "You are also directed not to roll out this feature until the consultation on this point is achieved to the satisfaction of the government."
▸ WhatsApp, Page 3A

75 km of pavements cleared in safe footpath drive, vendors protest

BENGALURU, DHNS

Earthmovers and tractors swung into action across Bengaluru on Wednesday as the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) and the city's five corporations launched the safe footpath campaign, clearing obstructions from roads in what authorities described as the first phase of an exercise to reclaim pedestrian spaces.

Some of the busiest stretches including Majestic, Sampige Road, Vijayanagar, Indiranagar, HSR Layout, JP Nagar and Jayanagar were covered in the first phase. In all, the corporations covered about 75 km in the opening day and plan to extend the drive across 1,500 km of arterial and sub-arterial roads.

The campaign follows Supreme Court's directions, which held that safe and obstruction-free footpaths are a fundamental right of pedestrians.

GBA workers clear obstructions from a footpath in Jayanagar 2nd Block on Wednesday.
DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

However, the street vendors' union opposed the move, alleging that the drive was "selective" and came without providing any alternatives.

The GBA cleared petty shops, pushcarts, stairs of commercial shops, advertisement boards, temporary roof extensions and sheds. The materials were taken away in tractors to ensure obstructions don't return. In some stretches, garbage and construction debris were cleared.

In Majestic and Vijayanagar, vendors opposed the eviction drive. However, there were no untoward incidents.

Officials said that starting July 3, those obstructing footpaths would be penalised and materials seized.

Greater Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda said the government was committed to protecting street vendors' livelihoods. "Except on 20% of arterial roads, vending can continue on other roads, provided pedestrians are not obstructed."
Full coverage, Page 2

Gruha Jyothi reverification begins; tenants fear exclusion

SNEHA RAMESH
BENGALURU, DHNS

Many people living in rented homes fear losing their benefits under the Karnataka government's Gruha Jyothi free power scheme as the energy department began reverifying beneficiaries on Wednesday.

As part of the door-to-door exercise, officials are asking beneficiaries to produce Aadhaar, voter ID and other supporting documents.

The drive has sparked anxiety among tenants who moved into rented houses after July 2023 but continue to receive the benefit under the previous tenant's name because the earlier beneficiary's Aadhaar remains linked to the electricity connection.

"We moved into the house in April 2024, but the previous tenants had already linked their Aadhaar. There was no way for us to link ours unless they first delinked it," said Vasantha L.
▸ Gruha Jyothi, Page 3A

> We're updating our database as it has been three years since the scheme was launched. No beneficiary will be left out. If there is a change of tenant, we will update the new tenant's details. If a beneficiary has passed away, we will update the details of the family member who is eligible. They will continue to get the benefits.
>
> **GAURAV GUPTA**
> Addl Chief Secy, Energy Dept

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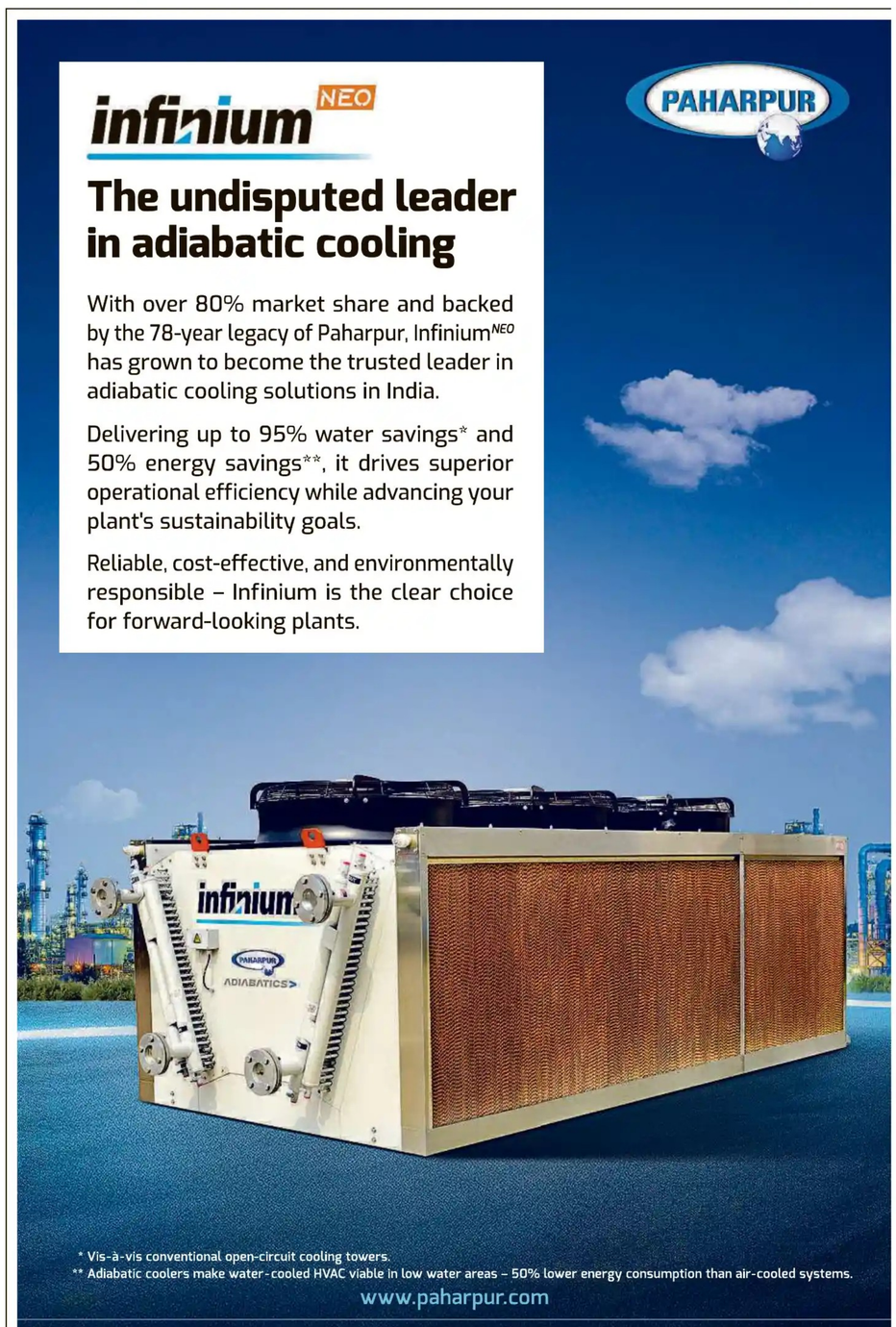

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UNHEALTHY TREND

Toxic ozone made B'luru air unsafe this summer: Study

AMULLYA SHIVASHANKAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

Bengaluru has breached a dangerous new environmental threshold, logging a staggering 55 days of unsafe ozone levels in just a 71-day window, according to an analysis by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).

Delhi and Bhopal were ahead, with 62 and 60 days, respectively. The study was conducted in 25 cities between March 1 and May 10, 2026.

During the study period of 71 days, the Karnataka capital's ground-level ozone levels breached the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) — 100 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m3) for a maximum eight-hour exposure — on all but 16 days.

Toxic ozone, earlier viewed as a day-time exposure, is now regularly persisting well into the night. In Bengaluru, toxic ozone continued to be present after sunset for 14 nights, according to the study.

Additionally, Bengaluru had 16 hours of daily prolonged ozone exposure, meaning citizens were breathing toxic air for nearly two-thirds of the day.

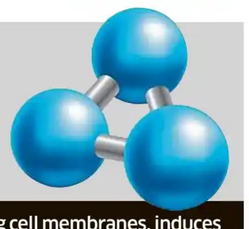
The study warns that this might have a growing health burden.

"As ozone is a highly potent, aggressive oxidant, it damages lung cell membranes, induces airway inflammation, increases bronchial hyper-responsiveness and amplifies a patient's response to baseline allergens. Short-term spikes drive emergency room visits, while long-term exposure is linked to accelerated cardiovascular mortality, heart attacks, strokes and irreversible COPD [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease] progression," the study noted.

Since the respiratory system is the primary interface between the environment and the body, environmental changes have a huge impact on respiratory health.
▸ Ozone, Page 5

Breaking safety barriers

- Ground-level ozone (O_3) NAAQS threshold: **100 micrograms** per cubic metre
- Level breached: **55 of 71 days in B'luru**
- City had **16 hours of daily** prolonged ozone exposure
- Toxic ozone continued after sunset for **14 nights**



> As ozone is an aggressive oxidant, it damages lung cell membranes, induces airway inflammation, increases bronchial hyper-responsiveness and amplifies a patient's response to baseline allergens like dust and pollen.
>
> CSE STUDY

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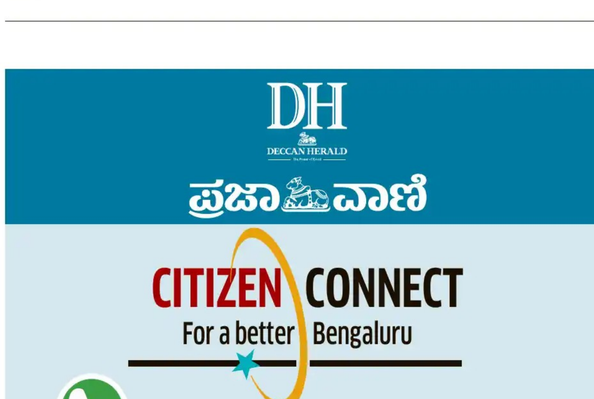
Almost every locality in Bengaluru has a street corner or vacant plot that has turned into an informal garbage dump. These black spots are not merely an eyesore; they are a threat to public health and the environment. Deccan Herald and Prajavani invite citizens to share details and photographs of such sites for publication in these columns, in order to help push for timely action from the authorities.
Citizens are also encouraged to share photos of garbage black spots cleared after being highlighted in these columns.



Bannerghatta Road near Shobha Magnolia. RASHMI CR

Huskur Road in Dasanapura Hobli, Bengaluru North. BALU KIKKERI

A stretch towards Ulsoor. A RESIDENT

BTM Layout Stage 1. MITRA

What netizens say

With unemployment and prices spiralling, rather than regulating and protecting street vending as the law mandates, we are witnessing an elitist destruction of the livelihoods of the poor. Meanwhile, the 'home gardens' on footpaths in Sanjaynagar, Indiranagar, Malleswaram and elsewhere continue to thrive.
– Clifton D'Rozario

We appreciate the swift action to clear footpath encroachments. However, we have seen similar drives many times before, yet little has changed. Secondly, even after the encroachments are removed, most of Bengaluru's footpaths remain unfit for public use. When will they be repaired? Has any deadline been set for completing this work?
– Vijeth Kumar

AGENCIES INVOLVED
Corporations | BSWML | Traffic police | Bescom

SAFE FOOTPATH CAMPAIGN: Shops displaying photos of politicians left untouched

'Why target us and not parked cars?' Vendors question selective footpath crackdown

Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) officials kicked off the 'Safe Footpath Campaign' across the city on Wednesday. These photographs are from Jayanagar 2nd Block and Uttarahalli Main Road. DH PHOTOS/PUSHKAR V

Localities where the drive took place

Central Corporation
1 Trinity Junction to MG Road
2 Indiranagar 100 Feet Road
3 Swami Vivekananda Road
4 Kanakanapalya Road
5 Jayanagar 8th and 9th main roads, 15th Cross Road
6 RV Road towards South End Circle

East Corporation
1 Hope Farm Jn towards Varthur
2 Marathahalli towards Iblur Jn
3 ITPL main road
4 Horamavu main road
5 Ramamurthynagar main road
6 Kundalahalli road
7 Hoodi main road

North Corporation
1 Sandeep Unikrishnan Road
2 Munireddypalya Road
3 Vidyaranyapura main road
4 Railway Parallel Road
5 Clarke Road
6 Banaswadi main road

West Corporation
1 Tumakuru Road (Gorguntepalya)
2 Mysuru Road (from Nayandahalli)
3 Mariyappanapalya Circle
4 Magadi main road
5 West of Chord Road and Dr Rajkumar Road
6 MEI Road
7 Lake Road from Dasarahalli signal
8 Chandra Layout, Palike Bazaar
9 Sampige Road
10 Rajajinagar 2nd Block
11 DVG Road
12 Katriguppe main road

South Corporation
1 Dr Vishnuvardhana Road
2 Kothnur Village Road
3 Vishwapriya Layout main road
4 80 Feet Road near RV Institute
5 ORR from DG petrol bunk
6 Jayanagar 30th Cross from RV Rd
7 JP Nagar 21st Main
8 14th Main Road from HSR signal
9 4th Cross near JNC
10 7th Main Road in BTM 2nd Stage

BENGALURU, DHNS

The launch of the 'Safe Footpath Campaign' on Wednesday was met with stiff resistance from street vendors, who alleged that enforcement was selective and carried out without first providing alternative vending spaces.

The drive faced little resistance on stretches such as MG Road, Swami Vivekananda Road, Horamavu and Banaswadi, where civic agencies mainly removed advertisement boards, extended roofs, and staircases encroaching upon footpaths.

Most of the opposition came from commercial hubs such as Majestic, Vijayanagar and Sampige Road, where vendors said the drive threatened livelihoods they had built over the past 30 to 40 years.

As civic teams removed stalls and other encroachments, vendors questioned why the exercise had begun before authorities created alternative vending zones. Many displayed identity cards issued by the corporation, arguing that they had been officially recognised as vendors.

"If I have been running this tea stall for 30 years without obstructing pedestrians, why should I be evicted? We are not selling anything illegal. If the government is genuinely concerned about public safety, let it first shut down liquor stores," said Murugan, a street vendor in Majestic.

During the drive, civic officials cleared stalls selling clothes, footwear, fruits, vegetables and other goods. Many vendors, particularly elderly women, broke down as corporation staff seized or removed their merchandise.

Street vendor Babu from Vijayanagar alleged that officials were violating the law by forcibly evicting vendors. "Losing even a day's income makes a huge difference to us. But the government does not understand. We have become easy targets. Why is there no action against the lakhs of cars and private vehicles parked on public roads and footpaths throughout the day?" he asked.

> It's a politically risky and unpopular decision, but a necessary one for the sake of Bengaluru. At least some footpaths should be reserved for pedestrians. I request people to respect the public's fundamental right to decent footpaths. Please voluntarily remove encroachments and obstructions. It is the law. It may inconvenience you, but it is for the greater good.
> **Krishna Byre Gowda,**
> Greater Bengaluru Development Minister

Babu and other vendors challenged civic officials to first remove abandoned and illegally parked vehicles obstructing footpaths before targeting street hawkers.

Several vendors also alleged selective enforcement, claiming that shops displaying photographs of local political leaders were left untouched while neighbouring stalls were removed.

Street vendor Srikanth, who has been selling clothes on footpaths in Malleswaram for 35 years, said the civic body should earmark designated vending spaces instead of resorting to blanket evictions.

"If eviction is the only solution, who will take responsibility of feeding my family? I have two children who are yet to complete their education. Malleswaram has several roads with wide footpaths. Despite repeated requests, the authorities have not created a proper vending zone," he said.

By evening, as the enforcement drive slowed, some vendors had returned to commercial areas such as Majestic and Sampige Road and resumed business.

Street vendors can do business on 90% roads... with one condition

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) on Wednesday clarified that street vendors will be allowed to do business on up to 90 per cent of the city's 15,000-km road network, provided they do not obstruct pedestrian movement.

Officials said the safe footpath drive is focusing mainly on stretches with high pedestrian and vehicle movement.

"We will be undertaking the drive only on arterial and sub-arterial roads where vehicles move fast," GBA Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao said. He added the drive would continue in a phased manner depending on the availability of staff and machinery.

On Wednesday, the Bengaluru Central City Corporation covered 16.35 km of roads, while other corporations cleared obstructions from about 12 km each on average.

On the possibility of vendors returning to the evicted spots, East Corporation Commissioner DS Ramesh said a continuous monitoring mechanism had been put in place. "Teams of marshals will conduct day and night patrols and remove any fresh encroachments immediately. Violators will be subjected to substantial penalties and strict legal action in accordance with applicable laws," he said.

Srinivas Rao, a resident of Thanisandra, said the civic body cleared the obstructions as promised. "I noticed that on the 1.5-km stretch from Nagawara to Thanisandra and Rachenahalli Junction, encroachments by street vendors from both sides of the footpath were removed," he said.

The Bengaluru Central City Corporation (BCCC) covered 16.35 km of roads, while the other city corporations cleared obstructions along an average of 12 km each.

While many residents felt street vendors are needed for both economic reasons and safety concerns, some said the number of vendors had gone up significantly over the years.

On Sampige Road, there were about 150 street vendors five years ago. "Now, that number has gone up to 600. The road cannot handle such a number, and pedestrians have no space to walk," a resident said.

Street vending at Jayanagar 4th Block. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

How residents of Cooke Town beat the black spot problem

BENGALURU, DHNS

Near Pottery Road skywalk.

A consistent effort by the Residents' Welfare Association (RWA) in Cooke Town has silently changed the area for good.

Over the last year, residents have seen many black spots vanish and better solid waste management due to proactive citizens who have held officials accountable.

Members of the Cooke Town Residents' Welfare Association (CTRWA) not only raise complaints with solid waste management officials, but also work closely with them as a team.

"Many times, our team members are on the ground at 5.30 am to see if all auto-tippers have arrived. Earlier, many auto-tippers would be marked present, but would not be physically present at the spot," said CTRWA president Raja Shanmugan.

"Now, such incidents have come down and marshals also post photos with GPS tags to ensure transparency."

The RWA has also brought in interventions to streamline the complaint management system related to garbage collection and dumping. It has asked citizens to ensure they raise a complaint on the Sahaaya app.

"Earlier, residents would just randomly post pictures of garbage black spots. That would not serve any purpose. Now, we have asked them to raise a complaint on the Sahaaya app and pass on the details for follow-ups," said Ronaldo Rego, lead, CTRWA SWM.

"Initially, complaints would sometimes be closed without taking measures. Then, we, as an association, would follow up seeking details on intervention measures," Rego added.

"Eventually, the number of complaints has also come down since management of solid waste has improved."

In the last 10 months, 15 black spots have been cleared and beautified, the association said. After these interventions, residents observed cleaner roads and better waste collection.

Fourth wildlife smuggling case at KIA

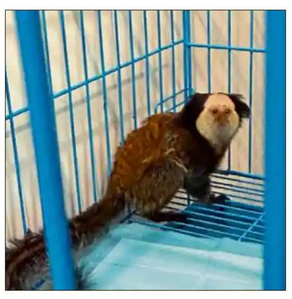
ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) recorded its fourth wildlife smuggling case since April, when customs officials caught two passengers on June 29.

The accused, aged 24 and 26 years, both from Kerala's Kozhikode, allegedly smuggled four cotton-top tamarins, one white-headed marmoset, and a juvenile cuckoo/coucal.

Both have been arrested, and cases have been registered by the airport's Customs Department and the Karnataka Forest Department.

"The passengers were travelling on Air India Express. This was unusual because a majority of the smuggling cases we have caught have been passengers on Thai Airways," a customs official told *DH*.



White-headed marmosets are endemic to eastern Brazil. CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT

Cotton-top tamarins smuggled on June 29. CUSTOMS DEPARTMENT

Drug export case

The airport also witnessed a rare case of drug export last week.

A passenger from Tamil Nadu, bound for Kuala Lumpur, was intercepted on June 26 with 6.98 kg of mescaline concealed inside a water purifier. The psychedelic drug was worth Rs 5.58 crore.

"Such cases are rare at the airport. We get, maybe, one such export case involving drugs like mescaline or amphetamine in a year, typically headed towards Southeast Asian destinations like Malaysia," the official said.

Customs officials also intercepted three cases of hydroponic ganja being smuggled into the city from Thailand in the past week.

Case of Thai national

"Another uncommon case we intercepted this past week involved a Thai national. A common pattern we have noticed concerning these smuggling cases at the airport has involved residents of Karnataka and surrounding states. But, on June 29, a Thai national, a male aged 22 years, was caught with 8 kg of ganja. We have arrested and booked him. He will soon go to trial," the official added.

On June 26, a 24-year-old Kozhikode resident travelling from Bangkok to Bengaluru via Abu Dhabi was intercepted with 5.96 kg of weed valued at Rs 2.086 crore.

In another case, customs officials intercepted a 35-year-old travelling from Bangkok with 15.52 kg of weed valued at Rs 5.43 crore on June 27. All accused have been arrested under the NDPS Act, 1985.

CMRS directs Namma Metro to investigate June 23 train service disruption

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Commissioner of Metro Railway Safety (South Circle) has directed Namma Metro to investigate the service disruption reported on June 23.

CMRS (Southern Circle) Janak Kumar Garg said the managing director of Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) was advised to investigate the incident and submit corrective measures, including those for similar train service disruptions over the last three years.

The MD was also advised to audit the effectiveness of the metro network's operational and maintenance aspects.

Under the Metro Railways (Operations and Maintenance Act), 2002, the commissioner should statutorily inquire into accidents involving loss of human life or grievous injury.

The CMRS specified this in response to a letter by Bangalore South MP, LS Tejasvi Surya.

Purple Line metro services through the CBD were suspended for more than five hours on the evening of June 23, the biggest disruption in the Namma Metro history.

Surya wrote to the CMRS two days later, requesting that BMRCL be directed to investigate all service disruptions reported over the last three years and detail the causes and corrective measures undertaken.

He listed 20 reported technical faults and service disruptions across the metro network since January 2024, with the Purple Line accounting for the most incidents.

He added that these disruptions indicate the issue is no longer confined to isolated breakdowns, but points to a concerning pattern that warrants immediate attention.

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INNOCEAN-020/26

Ex-MUDA chief gets bail in money-laundering case

BENGALURU, DHNS: The High Court on Wednesday granted conditional bail to G T Dinesh Kumar, a former commissioner of the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA), in a case related to Prevention of Money Laundering (PML) Act.

Kumar is in judicial custody in the case filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) pertaining to MUDA alternative sites allotment case.

The case originated from the private complaint filed by Mysuru-based activist Snehamayi Krishna, alleging irregularities in the site allotment in favour of former chief minister Siddaramaiah's wife.

The Lokayukta police filed a 'B' closure report against Siddaramaiah, his wife and two others, while the investigation continued against Kumar and others.

Meanwhile, the ED registered a money-laundering case against Kumar.

Can't find name in 2002 SIR list? EC suggests alternatives

Draft electoral roll will be published on August 5

PRATHIMA NANDAKUMAR
BENGALURU, DHNS

After complaints were raised by several voters in Karnataka that they were unable to locate their names as well as that of their parents in the electoral roll of the base year (2002), to fill the enumeration form during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, a senior Election Commission official on Wednesday suggested alternatives.

The draft electoral roll will be published on August 5.

"If you or your immediate family members cannot be located on the 2002 SIR list, you can choose progeny and relative mapping or register as a new voter during the claims and objections phase by filing Form 6 [for new voter registration]," said S Yogeshwar, joint chief electoral officer, Karnataka.

According to the official, a voter whose name is in the 2025 electoral roll but not in the 2002 list needs to mention a relative who figures in the 2002 SIR list. The 2002 list is accessible through https://voters.eci.gov.in/searchInSIR.

"If your parents' names are missing from the 2002 list, you need not panic. The system allows you to map your relationship to any paternal or maternal relative (such as siblings of parents) who is verified on the 2002 list. The relative could be enrolled as a voter anywhere in India as the BLO can access the data from the centralised portal to verify him or her as a genuine citizen," explained the official, adding that no supporting document to establish the relationship is needed to be submitted along with the enumeration form.

"Only if the voter gets a notice seeking additional documents for verification after the draft rolls are published, they need to submit any one of the 12 documents approved by the Election Commission," added Yogeshwar. Voters who have no relatives on the 2002 list will be treated as a new voter.

"Once the draft electoral roll is published on August 5, the 'Claims and Objections' window will be open (August 5-September 4), during which one can submit Form 6 along with a compulsory Declaration Form and one of the 12 approved documents, to claim inclusion in the final voter list," explained the official.

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

1. Identity card/Pension Payment Order issued by central or state government or PSU.
2. Any identity card issued in India by the government, banks/post office/LIC/PSUs before July 1, 1987.
3. Passport (accepted as a personal ID/residence document)
4. Matriculation or university certificate
5. Permanent Residence Certificate issued by the competent state authority
6. Valid birth certificate
7. Forest Right Certificate
8. OBC/SC/ST or any caste certificate
9. National Register of Citizens (wherever it exists)
10. Family Register maintained by govt officials
11. Any land/house allotment certificate by the government
12. Aadhaar (strictly accepted as a personal Identification -ID proof, not as a standalone proof of residence)

Ram Madhav 'secretly' met Pak officials: Hariprasad

BENGALURU, DHNS

Karnataka Congress chief B K Hariprasad on Wednesday claimed that Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leader Ram Madhav held four "secret" meetings with Pakistani officials.

Hariprasad said this while addressing a meeting of the party's campaign committee.

Madhav, Hariprasad said, has been put in charge of BJP for the upcoming Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) polls.

"Madhav has held four meetings in Colombo (Sri Lanka) and London (UK) with Pakistan. Someone who should be doing GBA election goes to Hilton hotel and meets top Pakistani officials, including a former major-general of the dangerous ISI. He has held four secret meetings," he said, quoting a media report.

Madhav has already denied this. He said he went to Colombo for the South Asia Dialogue organised by the International Institute for Strategic Studies. "No Track-2 is held with so many countries. I did not attend the two-day dialogue. I was invited to speak at one session, which I did and left," he said in a June 27 tweet.

However, Hariprasad linked this to a recent statement from RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat supporting a dialogue with Pakistan. "Two months after Operation Sindhoor, Ram Madhav held a meeting with Pakistan in London," he claimed. "When Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi were (in power), our stand was clear: we won't talk to Pakistan as long as it supported terrorism."

Hariprasad asked Madhav to clarify if he had authorisation to hold these meetings.

Halt WhatsApp username rollout: Govt to Meta

WhatsApp, From Page 1

In response, a WhatsApp spokesperson stated that the company has implemented multiple safeguards. These include reserving high-profile usernames for legitimate owners,

limiting new contacts, blocking username guessing attempts, and displaying account details (such as whether the sender is a new contact, shares groups, or is from another country) when someone messages via username for the first time.

The company says the feature, expected later this year, is designed to enhance user privacy, especially in group chats and interactions with new contacts. Users have already been allowed to reserve usernames and full scale launch of new feature later this year, said the company.

Sources in the government said that it will examine whether existing laws permit it to restrict the feature if risks are found unacceptable.

If Meta's response is unsatisfactory, further steps could be taken to prevent its launch in India. Paytm founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma earlier highlighted concerns on X, warning that similar-sounding usernames could become a vector for impersonation and scams.

SIR: Enumeration forms distributed to 9.87% electors in state

Only 2.38L forms digitised, accounting for 0.43% of electorate

BENGALURU, DHNS

Election officials have distributed 54.68 lakh enumeration forms (EFs), covering 9.87% of Karnataka's 5.54 crore electors, during the first phase of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls, according to a status report released on Wednesday evening.

While, 54,68,607 forms have been distributed to voters across the state, the digitisation process is still at an early stage, with 2,38,453 forms uploaded, accounting for 0.43% of the electorate. As many as 26,213 electors had submitted their forms online.

The mapped voter forms are getting digitised with ease as all the details are already available with the BLO.

Once the voters submit the enumeration forms, the BLO can feed the data on the mobile app and send the digitised record to the concerned ERO for verification, which will be included in the draft rolls.

However, the unmapped voters who do not figure in 2002 list, need to take the BLO's help to fill the form after identifying the relative verified in 2002 list for progeny mapping.

This is taking time. Voters can also log on to Chief Electoral Officer's (CEO's) website and choose 'book a call to BLO' option for assistance," said a senior election official.

Field verification has resulted in the identification of several categories of electors requiring further scrutiny.

Officials have marked 2,565 cases under ASDDO (Absent, Shifted, Dead, Duplicate and Other categories).

Booth Level Officers (BLOs) interact with a resident at Jayanagar in Bengaluru to distribute enumeration forms as part of the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of the voter rolls on Wednesday. DH PHOTO/PUSHKAR V

During the exercise, as many as 1,383 electors were found to be deceased, while 816 were identified as having permanently shifted their residence.

Another 327 names were found to be already enrolled, 21 electors could not be contacted, and a total of 18 cases were classified under other categories.

BLOs to mark 'OOD' on Kartavya App

Booth level officers and staff engaged in the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls can mark attendance using the "On Other Duty (OOD)" option in the Kartavya App, said Chief Electoral Officer's office on Wednesday.

CEO V Anbukumar said the government has directed BLOs to use OOD facility while on field duty outside office, after a request for attendance exemption.

The move comes as 59,050 BLOs began house-to-house enumeration from June 30. It will go on up to July 29. A video link demonstrating OOD process has been shared with all district election officers and GBA officials.

RSS meets BJP leaders, reviews SIR preparations

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on Wednesday reviewed the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) with top BJP leaders, who were asked to ensure "effective" supervision.

RSS Sah Sarakaryavah Mukunda C R, Kshetriya Karyavah N Thippeswamy and Kshetriya Pracharak Sudhir held discussions with BJP state president B Y Vijayendra, Union Ministers Shobha Karandlaje and V Somanna, Leader of the Opposition Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, former minister V Sunil Kumar among others.

"The BJP's preparation for SIR was discussed to a great extent. The RSS is aware that the governing Congress has taken SIR very seriously. The BJP was asked to see to it that booth-level agents (BLA) are effective in their work," a BJP leader directly aware of the discussions said.

The RSS and BJP leaders also discussed organisational strengthening.

"The senior leaders were asked for their opinions," the leader said.

BJP MLA accused of collecting huge money for Ram temple

BIDAR, DHNS: City-based social activist Deepak Patil has claimed that he has sent a complaint letter to the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Uttar Pradesh government accusing Aurad BJP MLA Prabhu Chavan, VHP leader Gopalji and his close associate Satish Naubade of collecting huge amounts of money from contractors in the name of the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

The Uttar Pradesh government has formed the SIT to probe the alleged embezzlement case, involving daily donations and offerings at the Ayodhya Ram Mandir.

Patil said he sent the complaint letter via email and speed post on June 25. However, the probe team has not yet acknowledged receipt of his complaint letter, he added.

He alleged that Chavan's wealth began to grow after he raised donations for the construction of the Ayodhya Ram temple.

He also said that they have collected a minimum of Rs 5 lakh from each contractor from Aurad taluk.

Charging that all these persons acquired more than 100 acres of agricultural land in the names of their relatives, he said that there is a possibility of misappropriation of the donation amount collected for the temple.

All these persons made huge investments in the real estate business in Maharashtra soon after the inauguration of the Ram Mandir temple, he charged.

Charges baseless, says MLA Prabhu Chavan

Terming the allegations against him as baseless, MLA Prabhu Chavan said they are part of several conspiracies against him. He claimed that he personally donated Rs 11 lakh for the construction of the Ram temple.

Landslide on Sirsi-Kumta highway hits traffic

KARWAR, DHNS: After battering, both the coastal region and Malnad areas in Uttara Kannada for the last two days, rains relented in the district on Wednesday. However, minor landslides were reported in at least three places in the district.

Vehicular movement on Sirsi-Kumta national highway was hit for hours following the landslide at Devimane Ghat in the small hours of Wednesday. Heaps of mud and trees rolled down the hill onto the highway. Minor landslides were also reported at Mururu in Kumta taluk and Hodke Shirur in Honnavar taluk. No houses were damaged in the incidents, according to the officials.

Vehicular movement was hit on Sirsi-Kumta highway following a minor landslide at Devimane Ghat, in Uttara Kannada district on Wednesday. DH PHOTO

The weather department has predicted heavy rains in several parts of coastal region, including Uttara Kannada district, till July 7

3 die as rain triggers...

Rain, from Page 1

Extremely heavy rainfall, accompanied by sustained winds of 30-40 kmph, is likely at one or two places, while heavy to very heavy rainfall with similar wind speeds is expected at a few places in Dakshina Kannada, Udupi and Uttara Kannada districts on July 2. Heavy to very heavy rainfall with sustained winds of 30-40 kmph is also forecast at a few places in these districts on July 3.

Heavy rainfall with sustained winds of 30-40 kmph is likely at one or two places in Belagavi, Dharwad and Haveri districts. Light to moderate rainfall accompanied by sustained winds of 30-40 kmph is expected at many places.

Ram temple: Biggest theft...

Ram temple, from Page 1

Luvkush Mishra and his brother-in-law Anukalp Mishra allegedly 'siphoned off' the maximum amount of money, added the sources.

Sources also said that the police have unearthed immovable assets amassed by the duo. Police are likely to seek help from the income tax department and other agencies to unearth the money trail.

Both Luvkush and Anukalp were among the eight accused arrested in connection with the alleged 'embezzlement' and are currently in judicial custody.

Earlier, a police team had conducted a raid on the residence of Luvkush Mishra in Meenapur Thakuran Fagauli village in Ayodhya district and allegedly recovered around Rs 12 lakh. Mishra was one of the staff responsible for counting the cash offerings at the temple. He was a car mechanic before joining the trust.

Mishra's brother-in-law, Anukalp Mishra, reportedly owned a farmhouse and a palatial house in Ayodhya.

Meanwhile, Ram Temple Trust general secretary Champat Rai, whose role in the matter was under scrutiny, was quoted by local media as telling his close aides that he was 'betrayed' by his own people.

Rai has submitted his resignation to the trust president, Mahant Nritya Gopal Das and it will be discussed at the forthcoming meeting of the trust. Sources said that a report on the matter had been sent to the senior RSS leaders.

The investigation has also widened to cover the role of around 400 private security personnel deployed at the temple complex. *(With PTI inputs)*

Forest staff, vets rescue wild elephant trapped in barricade

BENGALURU, DHNS: An elephant which got stuck between the railway barricades near Arekoppa village in Muggur Range, about 30 km from Kanakapura, was rescued after an intense operation by the forest staff.

Villagers alerted the forest department at 6.45 am on Wednesday about an elephant stuck in the barricade. Deputy Conservator of Forests, Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, N H Jagannath, and staff arrived at the spot with veterinary doctors Dr Kiran and Dr Girish.

The male elephant, aged about 22 years, was exhausted but had not suffered any major injuries. Officials darted the elephant with a tranquiliser before dismantling the barricade with a gas cutter. The village where the elephant was stuck is located about 10 km from Sangama, where Mekedatu dam is proposed.

An official said the jumbo was rescued after a four-hour operation. "It is likely that the young tusker had come in search of food. We drove it into the protected area," he said.

Student's head severed in accident

HUBBALLI, DHNS: In a freak mishap between a bus and a tipper, a 17-year-old student's head was severed when he leaned out of the bus window to spit, near Koppadakere village on Hubballi-Laxmeshwar Road in Kundgol taluk on Wednesday. According to police, Fakkiresh Muttalli, an ITI student from Shirur, was returning home in an RTC bus.

The speeding bus and tipper collided, and the tipper rubbed against the window of the bus, decapitating the student instantly.

CORRIGENDUM NO. 05 AGAINST TENDER NOTICE NO. CON/2026/APR/02 DATED: 20-04-2026

Corrigendum- 05 for **Tender No. CE-CON-DK-EPC-2026-02** has been published. For details please visit **www.ireps.gov.in**
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Tender Notice for e-tendering is invited by Principal Chief Engineer, Metro Railway, Kolkata for and on behalf of the President of India for the following work: **Name of work:** Zonal Contract for maintenance of Green Line from Salt Lake Sector-V (SVSA) to Howrah Maidan (HWMM) covering km (-)0.310 to km 15.657 including Central Park Depot and ancillary buildings in the Green Line corridor of Metro Railway, Kolkata. **Approx Cost of Work:** ₹2,10,53,214.64. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 4,21,100/-. **Completion Period:** Twenty Four (24) Months, **Date and Time of Closing:** 24.07.2026 at 12:00 hrs. The Tender Document and other details can be obtained from the website **www.ireps.gov.in.** Amendments/Corrigendum, if any, would be hosted only on the website. **Abridged e-Tender Notice No.: Civil-2586-2026 (Open)**
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Ashoka slams verification

BENGALURU, DHNS: Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka slammed the government for seeking to check PAN cards and caste certificates during its drive to verify the authenticity of Gruha Jyothi beneficiaries.

Taking to X, he said: "The government is scheming to have verification. They have asked people to show PAN cards and caste certificates." He sought to know what sort of a guarantee it was if an unconditional transfer of 200 units of power was now being "determined" based on income and caste.

Gruha Jyothi reverification begins; tenants fear...

Gruha Jyothi, From Page 1

"We asked the landlord to help but there was no response. Since we were receiving the benefits, we continued with the arrangement. Now, during reverification, we are worried we could be left out because we cannot furnish the original beneficiary's documents," the Rajajinagar resident added.

A Yelahanka resident said he had applied for the scheme under his wife's name and she had passed away. He is now unsure whether he will continue to receive the benefit.

"I didn't know it could be delinked and was worried that doing so might prevent us from linking it again. So I left it unchanged," said Vasu A.

Massive exercise

- As of May 31, Bescom had 68.86L Gruha Jyothi beneficiaries.
- 2,536 beneficiaries verified on Day 1 in Bescom jurisdiction.
- Verification and information collection drive to continue until Aug 31.

However, the energy department said its staff visiting households for reverification would help residents delink the previous beneficiary's details and update their records. No eligible beneficiary will be left out because of such changes, officials said.

"We're updating our database as it has been three years since the scheme was launched. No beneficiary will be left out. If there is a change of tenant, we will update the new tenant's details. If a beneficiary has passed away, we will update the details of the family member who is eligible. They will continue to get the benefits," Gaurav Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary, Energy Department, told *DH*.

75-year-old woman killed over Rs 20K loan; couple held

Accused dumped body near railway track; stole 39g gold

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Bengaluru South district police have arrested a woman and her boyfriend for allegedly murdering a 75-year-old woman over a Rs 20,000 loan, officials said on Wednesday.

The accused have been identified as Girija, 36, and her boyfriend Mahesh, 42.

They were arrested for the murder of Sushilamma, a resident of Sangabasavanadoddi.

According to the police, Sushilamma visited Girija's house on the afternoon of June 15 to discuss the Rs 20,000 loan she had extended to her.

Girija, the suspect.

Police said Girija had also failed to pay the Rs 600 interest due for June. When Sushilamma questioned her about it, an argument broke out. During the altercation, Girija allegedly strangled Sushilamma to death and informed Mahesh about the incident.

Police said Mahesh arrived at Girija's house, and the two packed the body in a gunny bag before dumping it near a railway track on the outskirts of the village.

They also removed and stole 39 grams of gold jewellery from Sushilamma's body. The ornaments were recovered following their arrest.

When Sushilamma failed to return home, her husband and son began searching for her and filed a missing person's complaint. Police said Girija even joined the search efforts to avoid suspicion.

Five days later, Sushilamma's body was found near the railway track. After identifying the body, her son filed a complaint expressing suspicion over her death, noting that the gold ornaments she had been wearing were missing.

Based on the investigation, police tracked down Girija and Mahesh, arrested them, and booked them under Section 103 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) for murder. Further investigation is underway.

◆ IN THE CITY ◆

GENERAL

Animal Health and Biological Institute Centenary: Karnataka Veterinary, Animal and Fisheries Sciences University; Karnataka Veterinary Council Hall, Hebbal; from 11 am.

FG Halakatti Birthday Celebrations: Vachana literature; CM DK Shivakumar to attend; Kannada and Culture Department; Nayana Hall, Kannada Bhavan, JC Road; 12 noon.

CULTURAL

'Dasavani' singing programme: Bhavani M Rao, and Gayatri V Srinidhi; Raghavendra Swamygala Math, Jayanagar; from 5.15 pm.

RELIGIOUS

Maha Kumbhabhishek of Sri Varasiddhi Vinayaka Temple: Thambu Chetty Road, Cox Town; 6 am.

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◆ CITY WEATHER ◆

FORECAST

Generally cloudy sky with light rain

TEMPERATURES

Maximum	27.3°C
Minimum	20.9°C
Rainfall	--
Humidity	69%
Sunset (July 2)	6:50 pm
Sunrise (July 3)	5:57 am
Moonrise	8:05 am
Moonset	6:51 pm

(Relevant data recorded at 5.30 pm) Source: IMD

Murder accused shot in leg after attacking police

BENGALURU, DHNS

A history-sheeter arrested in connection with the murder of a rival was shot in the leg after he allegedly attacked police personnel and attempted to escape during a weapon recovery operation at an isolated spot in Thalaghattapura on Wednesday.

Santhosh, 29, a history-sheeter from the Kumaraswamy Layout police station limits, allegedly pelted stones at the police team, including the inspector, while they were recovering weapons said to have been used in the murder.

A senior police officer said PSI Savinaya of the JP Nagar police station opened fire in self-defence, hitting Santhosh in his left leg and preventing his escape. He was shifted to a nearby hospital for first aid.

Santhosh was arrested along with three associates in Kumaraswamy Layout on Sunday midnight in connection with the murder of Raju alias Almurka (45), another history-sheeter who was hacked to death with machetes near Indira Gandhi Circle in JP Nagar on June 27.

Senior police officers at the location in Thalaghattapura where the history-sheeter was shot at.

According to police, 14 criminal cases have been registered against Santhosh, including two murders and five attempted murders.

Police also said the same gang was involved in a chain-snatching incident in KR Puram on the night of June 27, during which pepper spray was used on the victim before the chain was snatched.

62-year-old man falls to death from warehouse roof; manager booked

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 62-year-old housekeeping staff died after falling from the roof of a warehouse belonging to a car showroom near Garudacharpalya in eastern Bengaluru, police said.

Mahadevapura police have booked the showroom manager and store in-charge for causing death due to negligence.

The deceased, Ramappa M, a Bagepalli native, had been working in the showroom for five years, police said.

On Monday, he fell from the 15-foot-high warehouse roof while cleaning. He sustained grievous injuries and died in hospital.

Based on a complaint by his family, police registered a case against the showroom staff for failing to ensure adequate safety measures while assigning him to work at such height, a senior police officer said.

Had a similar fall recently

Anjaneya JR, son of the deceased, said Ramappa had suffered a similar fall from the same roof a few months ago when he was asked to decorate the premises for Ganesh Chaturthi. That time, too, he had carried out the work without any safety equipment or precautions, he alleged.

"My father was advised by our family members to stop working because of his age. But due to our financial difficulties, he chose to continue working for a few more years. He was earning a monthly salary of Rs 15,000," Anjaneya said.

Four Bengal workers robbed at knifepoint

BENGALURU, DHNS: Electronics City police have registered a case after four people were allegedly robbed at knifepoint near Bettadasanapura on June 28.

The incident took place between 6.30 pm and 9.15 pm.

The four victims — 25-year-old Yunus, 19-year-old Irfan Shaik, 20-year-old Sabir Shaik, and 18-year-old Owaidur Islam Laskar, all workers from West Bengal who have been living in Bengaluru for the past eight months — were chatting near Bettadasanapura after returning from work.

While Sabir was talking on the phone, three suspects approached him. Although Sabir said he did not know them, the suspects insisted he show them photographs of his friends on his phone, claiming the friends had scolded them.

The suspects then snatched his phone and walked away. When Sabir followed them, his friends accompanied him. The suspects threatened the four men with a knife and a wooden club, assaulted them, and fled with four mobile phones and Rs 10,000 in cash.

Before leaving, the suspects forced one of the victims to transfer Rs 488 via UPI and threatened them with consequences if they informed anyone.

Nurse killed after container truck hits motorcycle

BENGALURU, DHNS: A 28-year-old man was killed after his motorcycle collided with a container truck near Banaswadi in East Bengaluru on Tuesday night, police said.

Kelwin, a Tamil Nadu native working as a nurse at a private hospital and living in Ramamurthy Nagar, was returning home on his motorcycle when a container truck hit him from behind. The impact caused him to lose balance and fall onto the road. The truck ran over him, leading to fatal injuries.

Banaswadi traffic police have registered a case.

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Four held for supplying crude bomb to car blast victim

TUMAKURU, DHNS: Days after a man – Nagendra – was burnt alive in a car near Jogihalli in Sira taluk of the district on NH-48, police have arrested four individuals on charges of supplying a crude bomb was used to blast the car.

A Special Investigation Team arrested George Niclove Fernandes, Sandeep Gowda, Narayana Dollugowda and Nagaraju Dollugowda, all from Chandavara in Honnavar taluk, U-K district.

Tumakuru Superintendent of Police K V Ashok said Nagendra had procured the crude bomb from Fernandes.

Preliminary inquiry has revealed that Fernandes was engaged in making crude bombs for fishing. He sold the crude bombs he made to those who caught fish in rivers.

The probe has revealed that Nagendra had three crude bombs in his possession. Three teams with 15 members among them have been formed to probe the blast.

Detention of areca consignments in Maharashtra: Growers, traders can't crack the nut

Let quality be tested in destination states, why in transit, they ask; fear price crash

NAINA J A
MANGALURU, DHNS:

The detention of lorries laden with arecanut from Karnataka by the Maharashtra Food Safety and Drug Administration (FDA), citing alleged adulteration has triggered concern among arecanut growers, traders and cooperative societies in the areca-growing districts.

Lorries transporting arecanut to markets in Gujarat, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh have been stopped on highways in Solapur, Aurangabad, Beed and Nanded districts of Maharashtra since June 11.

Sources said the problem arises when traders operate without the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) licences.

Central Arecanut and Cocoa Marketing and Processing Co-operative Limited (Campco) president S R Sathischandra told *DH*, "Farmers should not use artificial colouring like red oxide, while processing red arecanut. Several arecanut plantations are leased out by owners. Those who have taken plantations on lease may be using artificial colours for arecanut".

Gutka lobby consiparcy?

Cooperative leaders suspect that the disruption may be an attempt to influence the market.

They alleged that if fears over adulteration push down arecanut prices, large pan masala and gutka manufacturers could procure the yield at lower rates and pile up stocks.

Fears of fall in prices

He warned that if the problem continued for long, it would adversely affect domestic arecanut prices.

"We have raised the issue with Maharashtra CM Devendra Fadnavis and Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Pralhad Joshi," Sathischandra said.

Malnad Areca Marketing Co-operative Society (MAMCOS) managing director Srikanth Baruve told *DH* that growers in the Malnad region never add any colouring agents to arecanut during processing.

There is a possibility that areca khaini contractors may be adding an edible substance, locally known as kaachu patta, while processing huge quantities of arecanut to make it look bright. Kaachu is added to the paani given to customers by chaat vendors.

Shivamogga District Areca Growers' Association president B A Ramesh Hegde told *DH* that traditional growers did not add any substance to arecanut during processing.

Following the detention of lorries, traders have slowed fresh purchases, resulting in reduced demand.

"Merchants are now afraid to purchase arecanut and prices have started falling in Uttara Kannada district. Let quality be tested in states that receive arecanut. Why should lorries on transit with required documents have to be stopped?" said Sirsi-based Totgars' Co-operative Sale Society chairman Gopalkrishna Vaidya.

Even lorries laden with 'Sirsi Supari' with GI tag (white variety of arecanut grown in Sirsi, Siddapur and Yellapur taluks) and traditionally-prepared red variety without chemical colour were stopped.

Farmers in Dakshina Kannada, who are getting good prices for hosa adike (freshly harvested and sun-dried chali variety), fear the situation could reverse if disruption continues.

Sources said, under FSSAI guidelines, maximum permissible moisture content in arecanut is 7%. However, when farmers fail to dry nuts properly before sale, moisture content may rise, which is one of the reasons cited by FDA for detaining loads.

(With inputs from Nrupathunga S K in Shivamogga, Manjunath Hegde Bomnalli)

BMTC to lease 3L sqft to monetise assets, raise non-fare revenue

Firms doing depot upgrades may get branding, ad opportunities

BENGALURU, DHNS:

The Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI) on Wednesday hosted an interaction with the Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), inviting industry participation in procurement, commercial asset monetisation, depot modernisation and infrastructure development.

The session brought together senior BMTC officials and representatives from the manufacturing and trading sectors to explore avenues for public-private collaboration.

The BMTC has invited businesses to lease nearly 3 lakh sq ft of vacant commercial space spread across the city, as part of its efforts to monetise assets and generate non-fare revenue while expanding partnerships with industry.

"We are slowly monetising our assets to support highly subsidised public transport. Businesses can lease our commercial spaces, partner with us and even support depot modernisation through CSR initiatives. Apart from the commercial space, BMTC has about 1,000 acres of land in Bengaluru city and surrounding suburban areas. Some of this is also available for collaboration," a BMTC official said, adding that companies undertaking depot upgrades could be given branding and advertising opportunities.

FKCCI president Uma Reddy hoped the interaction would help businesses understand BMTC's procurement systems, infrastructure development plans, smart ticketing solutions, advertising opportunities, electric mobility initiatives and depot modernisation projects.

BMTC officials outlined the corporation's procurement ecosystem, stating that materials worth nearly Rs 9 crore were purchased each month through the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal (KPPP). This spans nearly 2,000 items across 96 procurement schedules, ranging from bus components and lubricants for steel, glass, paints, tyres and maintenance services.

As part of the event, industry participants were informed about the processes on the KPPP portal and encouraged to register to participate in BMTC tenders.

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Kottur woman found dead under suspicious circumstances in Uganda

KOTTUR (VIJAYANAGARA DIST), DHNS: A 24-year-old woman from Kannanayakanakatte village in Kottur taluk of the district has been found dead under suspicious circumstances in Uganda, said Kottur police. Efforts are under way to get the body of the woman – B Bindu – shipped to India.

B Bindu

"We have no information as to the cause of Bindu's death. We will have to register a case once we receive the body. Taralabalu Jagadguru Shivamurthy Shivacharya has been in touch with the Indian Ambassador to Uganda Anant Iyer, and has arranged for the woman's body to be transported to India. This is all the information we have at the moment," said Kottur PSI Geetanjali Shinde.

It has been learnt that Uganda police have confiscated the passport of Bindu's husband Chandrashekara Gutta. The body will leave Entebbe in Uganda, and following a brief stop in Dubai, arrive in India.

SEASONAL CELEBRATIONS

Hundreds of people take part in the Bandi Utsava (bullock cart procession) organised as part of the Brahmalingeshwara fair to mark the Kara Hunnime at Karjagi village in Haveri district on Wednesday. Kara Hunnime is a significant agricultural and cultural festival celebrated, particularly in the northern regions of the state. It was celebrated on Monday.
DH PHOTO/MALATHESH ICHCHANGI

'No denial of Gruha Jyothi for want of caste certificate, ration card'

BENGALURU, DHNS: The Energy Department has asked citizens to provide Aadhaar, PAN, voter ID, tenancy agreement, caste certificate and ration card details during the door-to-door reverification of the Gruha Jyothi free power scheme.

Bescom staff during the door-to-door verification of the Gruha Jyothi scheme on Wednesday. PHOTO/ BESCOM

While Aadhaar details may be necessary because beneficiaries likely used them when applying for the scheme and the tenancy agreement will help determine the beneficiary's authenticity, many citizens wondered why other documents were required.

Since the scheme applies to all people, irrespective of their economic status and caste, citizens said other documents should not be asked.

"I have neither a ration card nor a caste certificate. I understand that they want to reverify the beneficiaries to ensure the scheme is not misused, but I don't understand why they want other documents that are not related to the scheme in any way," said Suhas R, a resident of Basaveshwara Nagar.

Writing on X, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, R Ashoka, pointed out that Aadhaar or voter ID should be sufficient to establish whether a beneficiary is a resident of Karnataka.

"Before the election, they said that the scheme was applicable to all categories of people. If that is the case, why are they now collecting caste certificate and ration card details?," he stated.

There are speculations that the government is collecting the data because it may limit the scheme to only some categories of individuals in the future, especially based on the economic status.

However, the department stressed that providing all documents is not mandatory but only helpful.

"We just want to update our database with beneficiary details; that's why the documents are required. We are not excluding any beneficiaries based on the document. We are just collecting these so that the government has complete details of the beneficiaries," said Gaurav Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary, Energy Department.

DH Classifieds

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CHANGE OF NAME
I, Kritesh Kumar, Residing at #20/4, 1st Cross, AST Block, Marappa Garden, Benson Town, Bengaluru - 560046, have changed my minor son's name from SHARATH KUMAR to SHIVANSH KUMAR vide affidavit dated 30.06.2026 before notary A. Idinabba, Bengaluru. Henceforth he shall be called as SHIVANSH KUMAR only

CHANGE OF NAME
I, Mohammed Munawar, residing at No. 27, Arekempana halli, Jayanagar 1st Block, Bengaluru-560011, declare that in some of my documents my father's name is mentioned as K ABDUL KHADER and USMAN KHAN both names are one and the same person of my late father, vide affidavit dated 01-07-2026 before notary Mohammed Hussain K, Reg No. 20459, Bengaluru.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, KARPAGA VIKRAMAN VISWANATHAN, residing at No.D-0, Samhita Enclave Apartment, No.8, Stephens Road, Fraser Town, Bengaluru- 560005 have changed my name to KARPAGA VIKRAMAN vide affidavit dated 30-06-2026 sworn before notary L.Gopalakrishna, Bengaluru. Henceforth I shall be called as KARPAGA VIKRAMAN only.

CHANGE OF NAME
I, KUSHAL KATAM REDDY and KUSHAL REDDY KATAM REDDY residing at Villa No. 59, Prestige Agustha Golf Village, Kada Agrahara, Anagalapura Main Road, Bengaluru-560077, declare that the above names pertain to me only & henceforth I shall be known as KUSHAL REDDY KATAM REDDY vide affidavit dated 01-07-2026 before notary L Gopalakrishna, Bengaluru.

Lost

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I, Thulasiram A. N S/o Late A. C. Nagaraj R/o No. 148, 6th Main, H.H.R.W Layout, Arehalli, Banashankari, 4th stage, Bangalore 560061, do hereby inform the general public that I have Lost my Original Absolute Sale Deed of Sy no 72/3 , Kannali Village, Yeswathapur Hobli, Bangalore North (Document no 843/ 2011-12).
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HC refuses to quash terrorism case on associates of US-based movement

BENGALURU, DHNS: The high court has refused to quash proceedings under the provisions of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) against six people associated with US-based movement, The Timothy Initiative (TTI).

The allegation is withdrawal/utilisation of about Rs 92.55 crore, between Nov 2025 & Apr 2026, using international debit cards issued by Trust Bank, USA, for use in regions affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in India.

Justice M Nagaprasanna rejected the petitions by Micah Mark, Jonathan S Rajan, Ajit Verghese Mathai, Varghese Chacko Bablu Kurmi and Supreme Joy, all associated with TTI, observing that the case "concerns national security".

"National security is the invisible architecture upon which sovereignty, stability and constitutional order of a nation rest. One of the gravest threats to national security in the present times is, the clandestine funding of extremism. Funding, therefore, becomes the oxygen that enables extremist movements to survive and proliferate. The danger of extremist financing lies not merely in the money transferred, but in the consequences it unleashes. Left unchecked, such funding can transform ideological extremism into organized violence," the court said.

Mark, accused number 2, was intercepted by the police at the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) with 24 international debit cards.

On Apr 18 and 19, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) searched locations in multiple states in connection with the case. During investigation, ED formed a prima facie opinion that the debit cards were issued under the deceptively generic name "Santosh Kumar" and were coded region-wise.

Mark and others petitioned the HC, arguing that no prima facie material was available to attract sections 13, 17 and 18 of UAPA and prayed against further investigation, saying the accused are persons of Christian machinery who help the poor.

The ED submitted that while only 24 cards were recovered, its probe revealed that Trust Bank had issued 900 debit cards and the funds were used to finance left-wing extremists in Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

The court said ED had prepared a detailed dossier, narrating alleged modus operandi of the accused, flow of foreign funds, manner of ATM withdrawals and suspected channelisation of such funds into regions afflicted by LWE.

KFCC demands govt-run OTT platform

BENGALURU, DHNS: Chief Minister D K Shivakumar on Tuesday told members of the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce (KFCC) that the government would extend its support for the growth and sustainability of the Kannada film industry.

Led by KFCC president Jayamala, a delegation met the CM and submitted a memorandum. Among its other demands were the launch of a government-run OTT platform to support small-budget Kannada films, higher subsidies, amendments to the Cinematography Act and a single-window system for renewing theatre licences. The chamber also sought a film archiving project.

New inscription sheds light on Mysore Wadiyars' village grants in Hesaraghatta

ASHWIN B M,
BENGALURU, DHNS

A previously undocumented 18th-century inscription linked to the reign of Mysore ruler Immadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar has been discovered at Dibbur village in Hesaraghatta hobli, providing fresh evidence of village grants made to temples under the kingdom.

The inscription was identified during fieldwork by history researcher M Narendra under the guidance of historian Vivekananda Sajjan and epigraphist K Dhanpal.

The stone inscription was found near the Anjaneya Temple in Dibbur. According to Dhanpal, the inscription dates to 1750, during the reign of Immadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar (1734–1766) and records that Dibbur village was granted to Sri Ranganatha Swamy Temple at Srirangapatna for the performance of temple rituals and daily worship.

History researcher M Narendra (left) and epigraphist K Dhanpal with the newly discovered 1750 inscription at Dibbur in Hesaraghatta.
PHOTO/K DHANPAL

"The inscription states that the revenue and taxes collected from the village were earmarked for the temple's maintenance, festivals and pooja services (anga-ranga bhoga and puja kainkarya)," Dhanpal said.

Although the newly discovered inscription contains a brief record, its script, iconography and layout match, another inscription found near the Anjaneya Temple at Nagamangala — a village near Yelahanka — suggesting that both villages were donated to the same temple on the same occasion.

The upper portion of the inscription features carvings of the sun and moon, while the centre bears the Kirthimukha (a fierce, lion-like mythical guardian face with gaping jaws and fangs), an emblem associated with the Mysore Wadiyars. It also carries depictions of the Sudarshana Chakra, Shankha and the Vaishnava Trinama symbol.

Narendra said the inscription had remained unnoticed for generations because villagers had mistaken the carved stone for a sacred idol. The inscribed portion had been buried under the ground and the stone was worshipped beneath a small shrine. During renovation of the temple, villagers shifted the slab and placed it beneath a peepal tree near the temple, inadvertently exposing the inscription.

Dhanpal said the discovery adds to a growing body of evidence showing that Immadi Krishnaraja Wadiyar made a series of temple endowments across the Yelahanka region in the same year. Several of these inscriptions have already been published in Epigraphia Carnatica, while others remain unpublished.

He added that the newly documented inscription, together with the Nagamangala record, provides insight into the administrative and religious policies of the Mysore Wadiyars and contributes to a better understanding of the kingdom's temple economy during the mid-18th century.

RSS meeting in Belagavi

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Amidst the Ram Temple donation embezzlement controversy, the RSS leadership will go into a huddle in Karnataka's Belagavi for three days in July for the annual prant pracharak meeting.

The meeting, beginning July 10, will be attended by RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and his deputy Dattatreya Hosabole. A top Sangh functionary from UP has reportedly been asked to collect all the information about the controversy.

Bhagwat is arriving in Belagavi on July 6 to participate in the meeting.

The Century Club picked new office-bearers and executive committee members for 2026-27 at the annual election held on June 27. Sitting, office-bearers (L-R): AM Raghavendran, honorary treasurer; S Balasubramaniam, vice president; K R Paranjothi, president; Abhishek Bogaram Arun Kumar, honorary secretary; and C N Guruprasanna, immediate past president. Standing, executive committee members (L-R): Sangeetha Srikishen, M S Vivin Kumar, K J Paritosh, Girish Baliga, P V Karthik, Suresh L Ahuja, Vikramaditya M Bijjahalli, Balaji Kota and Nethravathi Rajkumar.

Toxic ozone keeps B'luru air unsafe during summer

Ozone, from Page 1

Extremes of weather are a known risk factor for exacerbation of pre-existing respiratory diseases, according to doctors.

Doctors in the city reported cases of airway inflammation and related respiratory issues last summer, even though there is currently no data available on the direct health impact of toxic ozone on Bengaluru residents.

Dr Sheetal Chaurasia, Consultant-Pulmonary Medicine, said: "Respiratory infections and respiratory syncytial virus have increased by a large margin. Dry hot weather also causes dryness of the respiratory mucosa, leading to airway inflammation and respiratory symptoms like cough, breathlessness and wheezing. Extreme dry hot weather associated with the propagation of dust and wind has increased allergies."

This also poses a burden on the already vulnerable population, said Dr Swati Rajagopal, Senior Consultant-Infectious Disease. "The extreme heat also reduces overall immunity, making elderly individuals, children, outdoor workers and people with chronic illnesses more vulnerable and needing extra precautions during prolonged heat periods," she explained.

The issue also extends to skin health as ozone can weaken the skin's natural protective systems.

'Oxidative stress'

"Ground-level ozone is harmful as it tends to add to oxidative stress right in the skin. Over time it can weaken the skin's natural protective systems, and people with sensitive skin or existing conditions like eczema, rosacea, or atopic dermatitis may notice their symptoms worsen during these times," said Dr Priyanka Kuri, Consultant-Dermatology.

K'taka registers fourth lowest June rainfall in five decades, sees 42% deficit

Experts believe El Nino may play spoilsport in July as well

The storage level in the Tungabhadra reservoir near Hosapete, as on June 28, stood at 9.47 tmcft as against 61.88 tmcft of water in the corresponding period last year. The dam recorded little or no inflow during the month, owing to below-par monsoon in its catchment areas. DH PHOTO

PAVAN KUMAR H
HUBBALLI, DHNS

June 2026 will go down as the fourth-worst rainfall deficit year for Karnataka in the last five decades. The state received 116 mm of rainfall last month, a 42% deficit.

The state saw its worst rainfall deficit year for June in 2023, when it recorded 87 mm of rainfall against the normal 199 mm for the month.

Between 1976 and 2026, Karnataka witnessed more than 21 rainfall deficit years, during which the state's average rainfall for June was less than 190 mm.

During the same period, the state also witnessed 19 above-normal rainfall years, with cumulative June rainfall exceeding 210 mm. June 1991 is recorded as the wettest June in the last half-century, with 294 mm of rainfall, followed by 2007 (290 mm), 1980 (273 mm), and 1992 (271 mm).

An analysis of data provided by the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Management Centre shows that the number of below-average rainfall years has increased over the last two decades.

Between 1980 and 1990, the state witnessed six above-normal rainfall years, three normal years, and one below-normal rainfall year. The 1990s saw seven above-normal or normal rainfall years and three below-normal years. However, the decade also witnessed five years of extremely high rainfall.

Volatile June rainfall

Since the beginning of 2000, the state has experienced increasingly volatile June rainfall. The decade recorded seven below-normal rainfall years, three above-normal years, and one extremely above-normal year (2007). Between 2011 and 2020, there were five below-normal rainfall years, three normal years, and two above-normal years. During the decade, June rainfall ranged from 115 mm to 234 mm.

In the first six years of the current decade, the state has recorded three normal rainfall years and three below-normal rainfall years, with 2023 and 2026 ranking among the worst June rainfall deficit years in the last 50 years.

Experts say a normal June rainfall year is crucial as it not only sets the kharif cultivation season in motion but also replenishes dried-up water bodies.

Agro-economist Prakash Kammardi says farmers depend heavily on June rainfall for ragi cultivation in South Karnataka and for cereals, soybean, and other crops in North Karnataka.

"These crops may not be the staple crops for farmers, but cultivating them ensures financial stability and provides the confidence to take up main crops such as paddy, sugarcane, and others."

Sowing delayed or abandoned

Farmers usually begin sowing crops such as maize, paddy, ragi, jowar, tur, groundnut, cotton, and soybean once there is adequate soil moisture. If the moisture content in the soil is low, farmers usually delay or abandon sowing. Prakash says climate change has been affecting the state's agricultural calendar over the last two decades. "Farmers have to be made aware of the increasing uncertainty of the monsoon and prepare their cultivation patterns accordingly," he says.

While in recent years the monsoon has recovered, resulting in overall above-normal rainfall, experts fear that El Niño could play spoilsport in July this year as well.

Action plan ready to tackle deficient monsoon, says Parameshwara

BELAGAVI, DHNS: Not in the past 150 years has the monsoon failed as badly as it has this year, remarked Deputy Chief Minister G Parameshwara on Wednesday.

Underscoring the fact that the situation was without precedent, the Deputy Chief Minister was, however, quick to add that the state government had already prepared an action plan to tackle the crisis, with deputy commissioners of all districts being entrusted the responsibility of executing it. Pointing out that the monsoon had played truant in the seven districts under the ambit of the Belagavi Revenue Division, Parameshwara added, "We are convening a meeting with all the seven DCs and other officials. We will take measures to ensure drinking water needs are met, generate employment, and compensate farmers for loss of both cultivated and uncultivated crops."

Several districts had received only 25% to 30% of their normal quota of rainfall during the monsoon, said Parameshwara, adding that funds to the tune of Rs 5 crore had been credited to the accounts of Deputy Commissioners to cater to the drinking water requirements of their respective districts.

The state government would wait and see if the monsoon improved in July, said the Deputy CM. "Both the Centre and state have a set of criteria to declare taluks or districts drought-hit. We have to take stock of crop losses and water levels before declaring a drought," he added.

Min wage revision may come under review in Cabinet soon

BENGALURU, DHNS

The government is likely to review the final notification on revision of minimum wages in the Cabinet, following immense pressure from industries to withdraw it.

It is learnt that Chief Minister D K Shivakumar is not totally in favour of the revision, which has been dubbed by industries as "too exorbitant".

The revision, which increased minimum wages to Rs 31,114 for highly skilled labourers in zone 1 and Rs 19,319 for unskilled workers in zone 3, was a pet project of former labour minister Santosh Lad.

With the Cabinet yet to be expanded, the labour department remains with the CM for now. According to sources, the department has provided a justification note to the government regarding yardsticks for minimum wage revision after seven years and the basis for it.

The department is learnt to have argued that it is wrong to assume that a rise in minimum wages will lead to reduction of foreign direct investment (FDI) in state. "In 2017, there was a rise of minimum wages by 75-90%. But since then, FDI has only increased and industries from the state have not gone elsewhere. Even though Karnataka has one of the highest minimum wage rates in the country, it stood third in terms of FDI flowing in (after Delhi and Maharashtra)," the sources said.

The joint committee of trade unions (JCTU) has taken serious objection to the possibility of a review of the minimum wages.

"We are deeply disappointed and shocked to know that the new Cabinet is revisiting/reviewing the recent revision of minimum wages. We will launch agitations across the state, including picketing at government offices, mass protests at all district centres and state-level bandhs," JCTU said in a press note.

Daily rural wages fixed at Rs 300-409 under VB-G RAM G

In Karnataka, it has been set at Rs 382, a rise of 3.24% over old MGNREGA rate

AJITH ATHRADY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The VB-G RAM G Act replaces MGNREGA, increasing the employment guarantee from 100 to 125 days. AFP FILE

JOB SCHEME

- National average daily wage hiked by over 10% from Rs 298.8 to Rs 327.4
- Interim base wage fixed at Rs 300 per day, no state can fall below this
- Daily wage for Karnataka set at Rs 382, a 3.24% increase from earlier rate of Rs 370
- Southern states and Haryana saw lower rise as compared to Northern states owing to base effect

The Union Ministry of Rural Development has notified revised daily wage rates for unskilled manual workers under the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) — VB-G RAM G Act, 2025, which came into effect on Wednesday.

The new legislation replaces the two-decade-old Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, raising the national average daily wage from Rs 298.8 to Rs 327.4 — an increase of Rs 28.6 per day, or over 10%. Daily wages under the new scheme have been fixed between Rs 300 and Rs 409 across states.

A special higher rate of Rs 450 per day has been set for three gram panchayats in Sikkim — Gnathang, Lachung, and Lachen.

The notification introduces an interim base wage of Rs 300 per day, ensuring no state falls below this floor.

The VB-G RAM G Act provides up to 125 days of wage employment to eligible rural households, compared to 100 days under the previous scheme.

In Karnataka, the daily wage has been set at Rs 382, a 3.24% increase over the 2025-26 MGNREGA rate of Rs 370.

Northern and northeastern states have received relatively higher percentage hikes of over 15%. These include Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

Haryana, which has the highest notified wage of Rs 409, recorded the lowest percentage increase of just 2.25%. Wage rates in Telangana: Rs 308; Andhra Pradesh: Rs 312; Maharashtra: Rs 317; Tamil Nadu: Rs 345; Kerala: Rs 401; and Goa: Rs 406.

Wage fixation basis

According to the Ministry, the wage rates under the new Act are based on the prevailing MGNREGA wages, with adjustments for inflation and regional factors. Section 10 of the VB-G RAM G Act empowers the Centre to notify different wage rates for different areas, while stipulating that they cannot be lower than those notified under the MGNREGA.

The relatively modest percentage increases in southern states and Haryana are attributed to the "base effect" — these regions already had higher absolute wage levels under the previous scheme, said the official in the ministry.

States like Haryana, Kerala, and Goa, which traditionally offered higher wages linked to their agricultural minimum wages, continue to have rates exceeding 400 per day.

Cong criticism

Meanwhile, the notification immediately attracted Congress criticism with its General Secretary (Communications) Jairam Ramesh saying, "the injustice of the Modi Government's new law aside, the wages due to workers are also unjustifiably low — largely at Rs 300 per day... Given the widespread minimum wage protests in industrial hubs like Noida, and at a time when the stagnation of rural wages is widely recognised as a key constraint on our economic growth, this notification is both a snub to India's workers and an unwise economic policy".

Bill on removal of PM, CMs: Panel report soon

It remains unclear whether govt will table bill during Monsoon Session

AMRITA MADHUKALYA
NEW DELHI, DHNS

A Joint Parliamentary Committee appointed to examine the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill, 2025 — which seeks to remove ministers, including the prime minister, if they are arrested and remain in custody for 30 consecutive days — is set to submit its report in July, days ahead of the monsoon session.

Committee chairperson Aparajita Sarangi said the report will be submitted by July 17. "We have sought representations from across the country; no one has questioned the intent of this move — which is to decriminalise politics and uphold constitutional morality," Sarangi told *DH*.

Sources in the committee said members have so far met representatives from 42 institutions, including law colleges, universities, and several NGOs. Representations have also been sought from state governments.

State visits

Members have visited 11 NDA-ruled states and sought written representations from several others. States such as Delhi and Maharashtra have raised no objections. On Wednesday, Andhra Pradesh sent in two suggestions for minor changes, sources added.

NUMBERS TEST

- Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill seeks to remove ministers from office if they remain in custody for 30 days
- JPC report likely by July 17, ahead of monsoon session
- Committee seeks representations from states
- Delhi, Maharashtra raise no objections; Andhra suggests minor changes
- Bill faces numbers test in Parliament

It remains unclear whether the government will table the bill in Parliament in the upcoming session. The legislation requires a two-thirds majority of the House. Despite defections in regional parties like the Aam Aadmi Party, Trinamool Congress and Shiv Sena (Uddhav faction), the NDA does not have absolute numbers yet.

The bill mandates the removal of any minister accused of any offence that has a penal provision of more than five years in jail, or has been arrested and detained in jail for more than 30 days.

The minister can be removed either by the president or the governor on the advice of the prime minister or the chief minister, respectively, or on the 31st consecutive day of detention.

Oppn uproar

The introduction of the bill had triggered uproar from Opposition members when it was tabled by the home minister in November last year. A 31-member JPC was constituted in December to examine the clauses of the legislation, but Opposition members refused to join it.

The only four non-NDA members on the committee were AIMIM MP Asaduddin Owaisi, NCP(SP)'s Supriya Sule, SAD's Harsimrat Badal and Sudha Murty. Badal resigned after the first sitting.

WEATHER WOES

Vehicles remain partially submerged in a waterlogged road following heavy monsoon rain at Shilphata, in Navi Mumbai, on Wednesday. Heavy rainfall lashed parts of Maharashtra, causing waterlogging and disrupting normal life in several areas. PTI

Iran invites Kharge, Khera for Khamenei's funeral

NEW DELHI, PTI: Iran has invited Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and party leaders Salman Khurshid and Pawan Khera to the burial ceremonies of its late supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to be held next week.

The burial ceremonies will be held from July 5 to 9.

"The Congress president is in the process of finalising the party delegation for Iran," Khurshid, who is the head of the Congress' foreign affairs department, said.

Khamenei, who ruled Iran for the last three decades, was killed on February 28, the first day of massive US and Israeli air strikes on Tehran.

The burial ceremonies are slated to be held in Tehran and Qom on July 5, 6, and 7. The final burial ceremony will take place in the city of Mashhad on July 9.

Food regulator flags 6 brands over 'energy drink' claims

NEW DELHI, PTI: Food regulator FSSAI has issued notices to six beverage firms, including Red Bull and PepsiCo India, that sell energy drinks for misbranding and misleading claims.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has "issued notices to several beverage brands claiming to be 'energy drinks' for misbranding and misleading claims", the regulator said in a post on social media platform Instagram on Wednesday.

The six brands are -- Red Bull Energy Drink, Pepsico's Adrenaline Rush Energy Drink, Reliance Consumer Products' Campa Energy Drink- Gold Boost, Sting Energy Drink, Hell Energy and Coca-Cola-backed Monster Energy.

Comments could not be obtained immediately from the six brands.

FSSAI noted that it has not notified any standard for "Energy Drink" or similar products.

The regulator stated that these brands have "marketed using descriptors such as 'energy drink' on product branding and labelling".

The FSSAI further said that the Food Category System under the FSS Regulations is not intended for product naming or labelling purposes.

"Functional or therapeutic claims, including but not limited to 'vitalises body and mind', 'enhancing focus', 'boost energy levels', 'aid in general weakness', or similar conditions, are not permissible for food products under the FSS Act 2006 and the Rules and Regulations made thereunder," the regulator said.

Of late, FSSAI has issued notices to many food business operators (FBOs) for misbranding as well as misleading claims and advertisements. It has also issued notices based on consumer complaints.

For the last few months, the food regulator has been informing consumers about these notices through various social media platforms, such as X and Instagram, as part of its objective to ensure food safety.

Demographic panel to visit states for ground-level assessment

NEW DELHI, DHNS

The High-Level Committee on Demographic Changes (HLC-DC), headed by Justice (retired) Prakash Prabhakar Naolekar, will visit various states and Union Territories, as well as interact with central ministries, to derive a "first-hand, ground-level" understanding of the issue.

This was conveyed to Home Minister Amit Shah when the panel members met him here on Tuesday to brief him about the progress it has made since its constitution on May 26. The other members are retired IAS officer Durga Shankar Mishra, former IPS officer Balaji Srivastava, economist Shamika Ravi, the Census Commissioner, and the Joint Secretary (Foreigners-I) in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

An official statement said the committee would soon visit various states and Union Territories to obtain first-hand, ground-level details from the respective governments and interact with various central ministries "to receive feedback on subjects related to demographic changes".

A detailed questionnaire has been prepared to receive relevant information from states and Union Territories, it said.

The panel is tasked with scientifically assessing demographic changes due to "illegal immigration and other abnormal reasons", analysing their causes, and recommending appropriate policy, legislative and administrative measures.

Shah directed Home Secretary Govind Mohan to provide all possible help to the committee in its day-to-day functioning and during its visits, while urging the panel to provide its recommendations at the earliest. The committee was given a year to submit its report.

While announcing the setting up of the committee in May, Shah had said that demographic change is a "serious issue connected not only with our sovereignty, but also with national security, law and order, major changes in the social structure, and the protection of tribal society".

Registrar general warns against disclosing Census data

NEW DELHI, PTI: Registrar General of India, Mrityunjay Kumar Narayan has directed Census officials not to release "provisional population figures" or "any other data" collected during the exercise to the press or for use by any other authority until further orders.

In a communique to all the Directorates of Census Operations across the country, he said all information collected during Census operations is confidential and protected under the provisions of the Census Act, 1948.

"It needs to be mentioned here that the provisional population figures and/or any Census figures, based on the Houselisting or any other data contained in the Houselisting schedules/abstract, should not be released to the Press or used by any authority, official or non-official until further instructions are issued in this regard by the ORGI," it said.

An enumerator marks a house during the first phase of Census 2027. PTI FILE

Narayan said all the Census functionaries, right from the Principal Census Officer to the Enumerator and the DCO staff, should be properly sensitised regarding the confidentiality of the data collected and processed during the Census.

"Any breach of instructions by any official entrusted and concerned with Census Operations will be viewed seriously, and erring officials will be liable for appropriate disciplinary action under the Census Act, 1948 and other appropriate Acts and Rules," it said.

Narayan said that although the Census is a fully digital exercise where the data will be collected by the enumerators on their mobile devices using special applications developed for the purpose, in cases of operational contingencies such as technical issues, connectivity constraints, or other field-level exigencies, data may be collected in such exceptional cases using paper schedules provided in the Instruction Manuals.

"The Charge Officer shall ensure that data entry (on the Census portal) of all Houselisting Blocks (HLBs), where data has been collected in paper mode, is completed within 7 days after completion of the HLO (Houselisting Operations) period," the directives from the RGI said.

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Sealed Tenders are invited for the disposal of the following Newsprint wastes from our Press at Bangalore, Dharwad , Mangalore, Harihara, Mysore, Gulbarga and Hospet. For the period **July to September - 2026**

Details	Location-wise quantity in MT per month						
	Bangalore	Dharwad	Mangalore	Harihara	Mysore	Gulbarga	Hospet
DH & PV Print waste & unsolds (Voucher & Office copies)	12	6	4.5	4	4	4.5	2
Mixed Print & Folded waste	3	1.5	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2
DH, PV, Sudha & Mayura White cut Peel waste	4	0.6	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3
White Reel ends including core DH, PV, Sudha & Mayura	8	1.8	0.6	1	2	1	1
DH, PV, Sudha & Mayura Reel wrappers / Miscellaneous sweep / Bale pattie waste	6	2	0.9	1.2	1.2	0.9	0.9
Sudha & Mayura Print waste & unsolds - Magazine	1	0.4	0.9	0.4	0.6	0.9	0.05
Miscellaneous Tissue/Mixed White waste / Carton boxs	2	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.2

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OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, WATER WAYS DIVISION NO.2, HAZARIBAG.

e-Procurement Tender Notice No.- 01/2026-27- (C.S.R FUND).

Group No	Scheme Name	Estimated Cost (In Rs.)	Time of Completion
1.	पर्यटन विभाग द्वारा B श्रेणी में अधिसूचित पर्यटक स्थल छडवा डैम में पार्क, बहुउद्देषीय भवन, घाट इत्यादि के निर्माण एवं विकास कार्य	4,89,99,998.00	18 Months

1.	Date of Publication of e-Tender on website	20.07.2026 at 3:00 P.M
2.	Last date/Time for Submission of e-Tender bids Online	30.07.2026 up to 4:00 P.M **(e-Procurement Portal- http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in)**
3.	Last Date for Online Submission of Tender Fee and EMD	30.07.2026 up to 4:00 P.M
4.	Date of opening of e-Tender	31.07.2026 at 05:00 P.M
5.	Name & address of office Inviting tender	Executive Engineer, Water Ways Division No.2 , Hazaribag
6.	Contact no. of e-Procurement officer	06546-298163, 7903709450
7.	E-mail of e- Procurement officer	eewwdchak2-cer-jhr@nic.in

Note:- 1.) Only e-Tender will be accepted.
2.) Published Estimated Cost may be increased or decreased.
3.) Further details can be seen and Mode of Submission of Online Tender/Tender Fee/EMD through http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in

PR 383637 Water Resource(26-27).D

Executive Engineer, Water Ways Division No.2,Hazaribag.

JOB VACANCY

GOLDEN PALM STATION CANTEEN, BANGALORE AND ITS EXTENSION CANTEENS (KARNATAKA)

1. Applications are invited for 52 vacant contractual employees posts in GPSC & its Extension Canteens at Bangalore, Mysore, Hassan and KGF. Employment will be for 11 (eleven) months on contract basis. Interested candidates must visit GPC **website gpcscblr.co.in** for further details.
2. Applications-cum-Bio Data Form alongwith all its connected documents to be forwarded to **Canteen Officer, Golden Palm Canteen Cell,** through registered post or Mail ID : **gpccellkksa@gmail.com by 31 Jul 26.**

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER

Tender Notice No.: e-Tender/2026/24, Date: 30.06.2026. For and on behalf of President of India, the Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.), South Eastern Railway, Kharagpur-721301 invites e-tender for the following works **before 15.00 hrs.** on the date mentioned against items and will be **opened at 15.30 hrs. Sl.No.**-1. **Tender No.: E-KGP-East-38-2026. Description of work:** Transportation of P.Way materials from any station in Indian railway to work site / store Depot at Kharagpur under Sr.DEN/East/Kharagpur. **Tender Value:** ₹ 1,37,90,544.66. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 2,75,800. **Sl.No.**-2. **Tender No.: E-KGP-East-39-2026. Description of work:** Santragachi-Amta: Construction/Improvement of approach road at Dakshinbari, Maju, Jalalsi & Harishdadpur stations under the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN/East/Kharagpur. **Tender Value:** ₹ 3,31,09,311.67. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 6,62,200. **Sl.No.**-3. **Tender No.: E-KGP-East-40-2026. Description of work:** Execution of P-Way works in between Howrah-Kharagpur section– (1) TTR (CS+CMSC) 63 sets (2) TRR (P) - 23.764 Tkm. (3) Improvement of Sand Hump & Dead End under the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN/East/Kharagpur. **Tender Value:** ₹ 4,60,96,776.57. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 9,21,900. **Sl.No.**-4. **Tender No.: E-KGP-East-41-2026. Description of work:** Renewal of existing channel sleeper by H-Beam sleepers for Br.No. 57UP under the jurisdiction Sr.DEN/East/Kharagpur. **Tender Value:** ₹ 2,42,28,372.41. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 4,84,600. **Sl.No.**-5. **Tender No.: E-KGP-East-42-2026. Description of work:** Execution of P-Way works in between Howrah-Kharagpur section: (1) TFR for 23 Km. (2) Renewal of SEJ & Glued Joints. (3) TBR - 21.945 Tkm with Point & Xing under the jurisdiction of Sr.DEN/East/Kharagpur. **Tender Value:** ₹ 4,75,29,407.91. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 9,50,600. **Sl.No.**-6. **Tender No.: E-KGP-HQ-26-2026. Description of work:** Provision of individual Over Head PVC Tank with steel staging and pipe line for staff quarters at Kharagpur under jurisdiction of AEN/Water Works/Kharagpur. **Tender Value:** ₹ 7,53,43,412.77. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 15,06,900. **Date of Opening:** 17.07.2026 (for Sl.No. 1) & 30.07.2026 (for Sl.No. 2 to 6). **Tender Document Cost:** ₹ 0 (for Sl.No. 1 to 6 each). **Completion Period of the work:** 12 months (for Sl.No. 1 to 6 each). **Bidding start date:** From 03.07.2026 and up to 15.00 hrs. on 17.07.2026 (for Sl.No. 1) & from 16.07.2026 and up to 15.00 hrs. on 30.07.2026 (for Sl.No. 2 to 6 each). Interested tenderers may visit website **www.ireps.gov.in** for full details/ descriptions/specification of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tender for these works will be accepted. **N.B.:** Prospective bidders may regularly visit **www.ireps.gov.in** to participate in all tenders. **(PR-405)**

Major overhaul in military top brass as six senior officers assume key posts

KALYAN RAY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

General Dhiraj Seth inspects the Guard of Honour during a ceremony marking his assumption of charge as the new Chief of the Army Staff, at the South Block, in New Delhi. PTI

The top brass of the Indian military sported a new look on Wednesday, with at least six top posts being occupied by new officers, including the Army Chief, Army Vice-Chief, Indian Air Force (IAF) Vice-Chief and a new Chief for the Integrated Defence Staff.

Gen Dhiraj Seth began his two-year tenure as the Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) by reviewing a Guard of Honour at the South Block Lawns in the presence of his father, Lt Gen Krishna Mohan Seth, and other family members, including his brother, who is a Navy officer.

Outlining his vision for the force, Gen Seth said the Indian Army was a combat-ready, battle-hardened force, and that he would aim to build a technology-enabled, future-ready army capable of operating in multiple domains.

His Vice-Chief will be Lt Gen Sandeep Jain, commissioned into the Mahar Regiment in June 1988. He has commanded an infantry battalion in semi-desert terrain as well as in the UN Mission in South Sudan, an Infantry Brigade in a Strike Corps, a Counter Insurgency Force, and a Pivot Corps in Northern Command.

Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit — a very experienced fighter pilot with over 3,500 hours of flying experience — took over as the Vice-Chief of the Air Staff.

Commissioned into the fighter stream of the IAF in December 1986, Air Marshal Dixit has extensively flown Mirage-2000, variants of MiGs, HPT-32, AN-32, Avro, Kiran, Jaguar, IL-78, Hawk, and Tejas. He is an experimental test pilot and a qualified flying instructor.

Air Marshal Tejinder Singh replaces Air Marshal as the Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (CISC).

Commissioned in 1987, he is a Category-A qualified flying instructor with over 4,500 hours of flying experience. He has commanded a Fighter Squadron, a Radar Station, and a premier Fighter Base, and was Air Officer Commanding, Jammu & Kashmir.

Two key Army Commands — Southern Command in Pune and South Western Command in Jaipur — also received their new General Officer Commanding-in-Charge. Lt Gen Rajesh Pushkar.

Lt Gen Mohit Malhotra is the new GOC of the South Western Command.

Vijay signals formation of secular front, meets leaders

CHENNAI, DHNS: Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) president and Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay on Wednesday signalled the formation of a secular alliance in Tamil Nadu under his leadership by meeting leaders of political parties that have extended support to his government.

Vijay is learnt to have told the leaders that he will meet them again to discuss the modalities of the political front, including its name and agenda.

Though the CPM and the CPI, which hold a combined four MLAs, stayed away from the meeting at a luxury resort on the East Coast Road, the state secretaries of both parties met Vijay at the Secretariat in the morning and assured him of their continued support to the government. The two parties are of the opinion that there is no need to form a political alliance at this stage, with the next general elections about three years away.

While a Common Minimum Programme (CMP) was not taken up for detailed deliberation, there was consensus that a Coordination Committee should be formed and the alliance should be given a name.

DMK's Balaji accused of luring TVK MLA with Rs 35-cr bribe

TN police arrest three over no-confidence vote plot

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

Bringing former DMK minister V Senthil Balaji into the line of fire, the Tamil Nadu Police on Wednesday said he tried to lure an MLA from the ruling TVK by offering Rs 35 crore through his accomplices to vote against a 'no-confidence' motion that the principal Opposition party was planning to move against the Assembly Speaker.

Based on a complaint from Uthangarai MLA N Ilayaraja, the police arrested political strategist Thirunavukkarasu, Naresh from Trichy, and Thyagarajan from Medavakkam in Chennai. Police said that Thirunavukkarasu contacted Ilayaraja and offered the bribe on the advice of Senthil Balaji and his brother V Ashok Kumar. All three arrested have been sent to judicial custody.

The serious allegations against Balaji came on a day when the DMK petitioned Governor R V Arlekar and the Director of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption (DVAC) seeking the registration of a case against Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay for indulging in "horse-trading" by "buying" MLAs from other parties to manufacture a majority for his TVK.

LINE OF FIRE
- Police say Balaji tried to lure an MLA to vote against a 'no-confidence' motion against Assembly Speaker
- DMK petitions Governor, seeking FIR against Chief Minister C Joseph Vijay for indulging in 'horse-trading'
- Balaji's alleged link to the case comes amid a proposed visit by CM Vijay to Karur

V Senthil Balaji

The DMK latched on to the statement of its former ally, MDMK's Vaiko, that Vijay had promised to get his two MLAs re-elected if they resigned and contested the by-elections.

The allegations against Balaji of trying to bribe an MLA in an effort to remove the Speaker and embarrass the TVK government add to his legal woes. He spent over a year in prison in a cash-for-jobs scam under the previous AIADMK government, which had forced him to quit as a minister in the DMK dispensation between 2021 and 2026. Balaji also faces a CBI inquiry into corruption charges in the purchase of transformers during his tenure as electricity minister.

Reacting to the arrests, Electricity Minister CTR Nirmal Kumar alleged that the DMK was willing to offer even Rs 50 crore to TVK MLAs to topple the government.

Balaji's alleged link to the case comes amid a proposed visit by CM Vijay to Karur, the DMK leader's stronghold. Vijay is scheduled to visit the western Tamil Nadu town on July 10 and 11 — his first trip after the stampede — to attend government events and meet the families of the accident victims.

Police sources told *DH* that Thirunavukkarasu kept troubling Ilayaraja over the phone despite the MLA's reluctance to engage with him. At one point, Thirunavukkarasu offered Rs 35 crore to TVK MLA to vote in favour of the no-confidence motion against the Speaker.

Cross-border appeal seeks thaw in India-Pak ties

ZULFIKAR MAJID
SRINAGAR, DHNS

CALL FOR PEACE
- Appeal issued by the Centre for Peace and Progress
- Signed by 61 Indians and 56 Pakistanis
- Hurriyat chief, a signatory, says people of J&K had 'suffered enough and deserve peace'
- Initiative drew sharp criticism from BJP

In a rare cross-border peace initiative amid the lowest point in India-Pakistan relations in years, 117 prominent citizens from the two countries have jointly urged Prime Ministers Narendra Modi and Shehbaz Sharif to resume comprehensive dialogue, restore diplomatic engagement, and rebuild normal bilateral ties, arguing that prolonged hostilities were jeopardising the future of nearly 200 crore people.

The appeal, issued by the Centre for Peace and Progress (CPP) and signed by 61 Indians and 56 Pakistanis, comes more than a year after Operation Sindoor.

The letter called for the restoration of full diplomatic relations through the appointment of high commissioners, the resumption of visa services, the reopening of airspace for civilian flights, the revival of bilateral trade, and greater cultural, academic, and people-to-people exchanges.

It also sought the revival of cross-Line of Control confidence-building measures, including the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, besides easier access to religious sites such as Kartarpur Sahib and Sharada Peeth.

The signatories urged New Delhi and Islamabad to resume dialogue on all outstanding issues, including Kashmir, build on the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration, revive the Joint Commission, and adopt humanitarian measures such as the release of civilian prisoners and fishermen who have completed their sentences.

Hurriyat Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, one of the signatories, said the people of Jammu and Kashmir had "suffered enough and deserve peace, closure, justice and a dignified resolution."

The initiative drew sharp criticism from the BJP, whose national general secretary, Rajya Sabha member Tarun Chugh, said: "It is deeply unfortunate that certain political leaders in India continue to advocate Pakistan's agenda while conveniently ignoring decades of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism that has claimed thousands of innocent Indian lives and the sacrifices of our brave security forces."

72 websites got FCRA clearances in 2026 so far, shows govt data

NEW DELHI, PTI: RSS-linked Seva Bharathi, Project Mumbai, and Hare Krishna movement are among 72 voluntary groups registered this year to receive foreign donations under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010, according to government data.

Kakinada-based Seva Bharathi, which runs blood banks and helps in disaster relief and education, has been registered under the "Economic, Educational and Social" purposes category to receive foreign funds.

The home ministry has cleared 72 organisations as eligible to receive foreign donations under different categories, data showed.

Project Mumbai, which operates on a Public-Private-People Partnership model to bring social transformation in Mumbai and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, works to provide clean water, mental health, food for the needy and improve accessibility and inclusivity, according to the organisation's website.

Hare Krishna Movement India -- registered under the Religious (Hindu), Cultural, Economic, Educational, Social category -- works towards empowering "underprivileged children from rural communities", according to the government website.

Unaware of Adani, MSC's Vizhinjam deal: Kerala govt

Port investment plan raises monopoly concerns

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

UNDER SCRUTINY
- Switzerland-based MSC to acquire 49% stake in Adani's Vizhinjam port
- Cong govt says no official intimation despite mandatory nods
- Opposition flags monopoly risk

A day after Adani Ports announced Mediterranean Shipping Company's (MSC) major investment plan at the Vizhinjam International Seaport in Kerala, Kerala's Congress-led government said it was in the dark about the move, even though it requires both the state and Centre's mandatory approval.

The CPM-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) in the Opposition said the deal could lead to the monopolisation of the port's operations.

On Tuesday, Adani Ports announced that Switzerland-based MSC, the world's largest shipping firm, would invest about Rs 13,220 crore to acquire a 49% stake in the Adani Vizhinjam Port Private Limited (AVPPL) through its terminal arm, Terminal Investment Limited (TiL).

Kerala Chief Minister V D Satheesan told the Assembly on Wednesday that other than media reports, the state government had no information on the deal, even though Adani Ports requires the state's approval for any change in ownership.

He added that the government would clear the investment only after examining aspects such as national security, public interest, fair competition, investment promotion for all firms, and the port's development.

"As per the concessionaire agreement, AVPPL must obtain the state government's prior approval for any ownership change. The Centre's nod is also mandatory as the deal involves foreign investment and national security. The state government will approve the proposal only after ensuring that public interest is not compromised, that monopolisation does not affect fair competition," he said.

Opposition leader and ex-CM Pinarayi Vijayan said it was surprising that the government had not been informed of MSC's investment plan, which is considered critical infrastructure during terror alerts, making security clearance for foreign investments essential.

The Vizhinjam port, which began trial operations in July 2024, has already emerged as a key hub for container transshipment. In just two years, 1,000 ships have docked there — a historic milestone. With gateway cargo operations expected to begin soon, the port is set to give a major boost to Kerala's economy.

Huge cutouts of footballers Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo installed at Vizhinjam International Seaport in Thiruvananthapuram on Wednesday. PTI

Rain deficit, football fever trigger power crisis in Kerala

ARJUN RAGHUNATH
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, DHNS

SHORTFALL TOLL
- 34% monsoon shortfall cripples hydel output
- FIFA fever fuels demand surge; consumption spikes to 4,900 MW
- State unable to buy power even at higher tariffs
- Spice farmers fear crop loss

A 34% deficit in the southwest monsoon during June, coupled with a surge in power consumption owing to the FIFA World Cup, has led to acute power scarcity in Kerala, forcing authorities to impose undeclared power cuts.

The crisis is snowballing into a political row, with the Opposition CPM-led Left Democratic Front accusing the government of lapses in power management and planning.

Against an expected peak demand of 4,100 MW, actual consumption shot up to 4,900 MW, while hydel generation was badly hit as reservoir storage dropped to just 21% of capacity. Power scarcity in the central pool, triggered by a nationwide shortage caused by El Nino, has derailed Kerala's plans to purchase electricity even at higher tariffs.

In a bid to tackle the crisis, the state is moving to expedite the commissioning of ongoing hydel projects and to roll out battery energy storage initiatives.

Power Minister Sunny Joseph said that of the six battery storage projects being set up, five are expected to be commissioned this year.

Speaking in the Assembly, he said that while Kerala's average daily power consumption is around 90 million units, the state generates only 15-16 million units. More than 80% of its requirement is met through external purchase. Since hydel generation is often hit by climate change, alternative sources must be explored, he said.

The undeclared power cuts imposed by the Kerala State Electricity Board have even sparked protests in parts of the state, particularly among football fans.

In a relief to consumers, the Kerala State Electricity Regulatory Commission has directed the electricity board to avoid undeclared power cuts and to give at least one hour's prior intimation to consumers.

Farmers feel the heat

The rain deficit is taking a toll on farmers as well. Spice growers in the high-range districts of Idukki and Wayanad say that inadequate and untimely rainfall will hit both the quantity and quality of crops such as cardamom and pepper.

Paddy farmers are also aggrieved, with sowing and transplanting disrupted by the lack of rain and soaring temperatures.

Agriculture Minister T Siddique said the state government plans to seek central assistance to compensate farmers for losses caused by climate change.

In a first, Maha moves to legally recognise women farmers

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

In a historic first, the Devendra Fadnavis-headed BJP-led dispensation on Wednesday introduced the Maharashtra Women Farmers Empowerment Bill, 2026, which will legally recognise women farmers as independent farmers in the state.

Nearly two years after the Maha Yuti government rolled out the flagship Mukhya Mantri Majhi Ladki Bahin Yojana, this is one of the major steps toward empowering women in the state.

State Agriculture Minister Dattatrey Bharane tabled the Bill in the Maharashtra Assembly on Wednesday. It seeks to ensure that women engaged in agriculture and allied activities receive recognition, rights and opportunities.

Need for legislation

Across Maharashtra, women make up more than 81% of the workforce in agriculture. However, most policies and government schemes in the sector remain male-centric.

Since land ownership is often a prerequisite for availing benefits under agricultural schemes, many women farmers are excluded from these benefits.

Women cultivating family- or community-owned land, as well as those engaged in allied activities such as fisheries, livestock rearing, poultry farming, and collection of forest produce, are often not recognised as farmers. It is against this backdrop that the proposed legislation was drafted.

The legislation aims to provide statutory recognition to women engaged in agriculture as "farmers," establish institutional mechanisms for their welfare, and ensure access to credit, technology, markets, and other services.

In addition to conventional farming, the Bill covers activities such as animal husbandry, dairy farming, poultry farming, beekeeping, fisheries, sericulture, horticulture, floriculture, mushroom cultivation, agroforestry and collection of forest produce.

Cong retains Warring as Punjab chief; Channi to lead campaign

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Facing elections in less than eight months, Congress on Wednesday assigned important roles to senior leaders in the faction-ridden Punjab unit by striking a balance between Jat Sikhs, Dalits and Hindus but without changing its president and legislature party leader.

Amarinder Singh Raja Warring

Charanjit Singh Channi

Punjab Congress president Amarinder Singh Raja Warring and Legislature Party leader Partap Singh Bajwa will continue in their positions even as the party appointed former chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi as Campaign Committee chairman.

Vijay Inder Singla has been appointed as Chairperson of the Election Management and Coordination Committee, while Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa will head the Core Committee and Dr Amar Singh will helm the Manifesto Committee. It also appointed three working presidents and co-chairpersons for panels.

The latest appointments also show that the central leadership has sent an unambiguous signal to Punjab leaders that they will have to face the elections under "collective leadership" and the party will not be projecting a single leader as its face.

There has been intense lobbying to remove Warring as president, as Channi and Bajwa, among others, were eyeing the top job in the state, which will likely go to polls in February next year. However, the leadership stuck to not disturbing the present system as it feared that a rejig could further intensify factionalism.

While Warring, Bajwa and Randhawa are Jat Sikhs, it gave Channi and Amar Singh, who are Dalits, prime positions. To give representation to the Hindu community, Singla was also given prominent space.

Earlier, there was speculation that Singla might replace Warring to woo Hindu voters.

Rahul signals Congress-SP unity ahead of UP polls

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Rahul Gandhi with Akhilesh Yadav. AFP FILE

In what is being seen as a political message from the Congress ahead of next year's Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, senior party leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday greeted Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on his birthday and pledged to work together to advance social justice through the participation of the 'PDA' — Pichda (Backward), Dalit and Adivasi communities.

Rahul has increasingly centred his political campaign around the theme of social justice. His specific reference to 'PDA', a term popularised by Akhilesh, in a post on X is being viewed as a signal of the I.N.D.I.A bloc's likely campaign theme in Uttar Pradesh and an indication of efforts to ensure smooth seat-sharing negotiations between the two parties.

"Warmest birthday greetings to Akhilesh Yadav-ji. Together, we will fulfil our commitment to social justice through the participation of the PDA. Wishing you good health and a happy, prosperous life," Rahul wrote on X.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge also greeted Akhilesh, saying: "Together, we will continue to advance towards social justice, inclusive development and strengthening democracy and the Constitution."

The SP-Congress alliance performed strongly in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, winning 43 seats. The SP secured 33.84% of the vote, while Congress won 9.53%, campaigning largely on the theme of protecting the Constitution. Both parties are keen to carry forward the alliance into the Assembly elections. Congress is reportedly seeking 80-100 seats in the 403-member Assembly.

In the 2022 Assembly polls, the two parties contested separately. The SP increased its vote share from 21.8% in 2017 to 32.06%, while Congress saw its share decline from 6.25% to 2.33%. The parties had contested the 2017 election together but went their separate ways five years later.

Observers have also noted that Rahul's birthday greetings to political allies often offer clues about Congress' future coalition priorities. His relatively restrained greeting to DMK chief M K Stalin had earlier sparked speculation about strains within the alliance.

However, responding to Stalin's greetings on Rahul's birthday on June 19, the Congress leader emphasised unity, saying their "shared resolve to defend the idea of India, our Constitution, and federalism will continue to guide us".

At an I.N.D.I.A bloc meeting on June 8, which the DMK did not attend, Rahul expressed confidence that the party would stand with the alliance whenever the defence of constitutional values and the idea of India was at stake.

RELIEF FOR CONVICT

Governor's powers trump statutory remission policy: Supreme Court

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

In a significant ruling on the interplay between constitutional and statutory powers, the Supreme Court on Wednesday held that a remission policy framed by a state government under the governor's powers under Article 161 of the Constitution cannot be overridden by a subsequent statutory policy issued under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).

A bench of Justices Sanjay Karol and N Kotiswar Singh declared that Haryana's 2002 remission policy — routed through the governor under Article 161 — remains operative and applicable, despite the state's 2008 statutory policy framed under Sections 432 and 433 CrPC.

"It need not be said that a statutory policy cannot override an exercise of power under Article 161, for that power is distinct and independent, uninfluenced by any other power, more so statutory in nature," the bench said.

The court also held its own 2021 judgment in State of Haryana vs Raj Kumar as per incuriam for contradicting the binding larger bench decision in State of Haryana vs Jagdish (2010).

The verdict came on an appeal filed by a life convict, convicted in 2009 for the murder of a 12-year-old, whose application for premature release after serving over 14 years in prison was rejected by the Haryana government and the Punjab and Haryana HC. The authorities had insisted that the convict was governed by the stricter 2008 policy, which required 20 years of actual imprisonment and 25 years total for eligibility.

Examining the two policies, the SC noted that the 2002 policy explicitly required remission cases to be placed before the governor for orders under Article 161, while the 2008 policy invoked the CrPC provisions and sought approval of the chief minister.

The bench drew strength from the three-judge bench ruling in Jagdish, which had recognised a similar 1993 Haryana remission policy as an exercise of constitutional powers under Article 161.

Since the 2002 policy was materially identical, the subsequent statutory policy could not supersede it, the court held.

The two-judge bench's contrary view in Raj Kumar (2021) — that the 2002 policy was merely statutory because it did not expressly mention Article 161 — was held unsustainable and per incuriam in light of the binding precedent.

Allowing the appeal, the SC directed the Haryana government to reconsider the appellant's remission application under the 2002 policy within four weeks.

However, the ruling will apply prospectively and will not reopen cases where remission applications have already been decided, the court clarified.

DECCAN HERALD
ESTABLISHED 1948

State powers and a blurry red line

Two bills passed this week by the West Bengal Assembly – the Public Safety and Control of Anti-Social Activities Bill, 2026, and the Maintenance of Public Order (Amendment) Bill, 2026 – risk arbitrary application of state powers. While the first bill expands powers to combat crime and "anti-social activities", the second allows the state government to recover compensation for property damage caused during riots and violent protests. Both pieces of legislation contain stringent provisions that bypass standard democratic procedures. Notably, the Public Safety Bill authorises the government to enforce preventive detention for up to 12 months without trial. The Bill's broad use of terms such as "anti-social activity" and "goonda" makes it vulnerable to potential misuse against political dissenters or others targeted for government action. Additionally, it empowers the state to attach properties allegedly linked to these activities, raising concerns over civil liberties.

The Bill explicitly names several activities while leaving room for many more to fall under its purview. This may encourage defining dissent and protests as anti-social behaviour. While it proposes advisory boards to review applications of the detainees, it bars access to legal counsel without the board's approval and mandates confidential proceedings, making the process opaque and undermining due process. Critics have drawn sharp comparisons with the National Security Act, 1980, and the colonial-era Bengal Regulation III of 1818, under which freedom fighters were indefinitely detained or deported. Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari has assured that the Bill will not be misused. However, such assurances ring hollow given the government's record of weaponising existing laws against political opponents.

West Bengal's new public order laws risk criminalising dissent and eroding civil liberties

The Maintenance of Public Order Bill seeks to establish a statutory claims commission to assess and recover compensation for damage to public and private property during riots, unlawful assemblies, and violent protests. Its powers extend beyond those directly involved in the violence to organisers, financiers, and others who may be held financially liable. While framed as a mechanism to fix responsibility, these provisions raise concerns about potential misuse against politicians in the opposition ranks, activists, and citizens protesting government policies. The broad wording of the Bill enables arbitrary action, with limited safeguards or effective redress systems. The provisions on preventive detention may facilitate executive overreach at the expense of civil liberties. Preventive detention has long been viewed with constitutional scepticism, and courts have cautioned against its misuse. By proposing a stronger statutory basis to exercise such powers, the West Bengal government has invited legal scrutiny, making constitutional challenges to the legislation almost inevitable.

ABC: Reset before raising targets

Bengaluru Development Minister Krishna Byre Gowda was fully justified in pulling up officers overseeing the city's Animal Birth Control (ABC) programme during a recent meeting of the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA). His frustration reflects the concerns of countless Bengalureans who have watched the stray dog problem persist despite years of assurances, extensive sterilisation drives, and substantial public expenditure. Introduced around 2000 as a humane alternative to culling, the ABC programme sought to control the stray dog population through sterilisation and vaccination. After the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) was formed in 2007, the initiative expanded through partnerships with NGOs entrusted with capturing, sterilising, and releasing dogs. Over Rs 120 crore has been spent since then, including Rs 40 crore in the last five years. The arithmetic, however, does not add up. Official records show that between 2016 and 2023 alone, 3.3 lakh sterilisation surgeries were performed – more than the entire stray dog population of 3.1 lakh recorded in the 2019 census. Given that the average lifespan of a street dog is only six to eight years, such extensive sterilisation should have caused a drastic reduction in the population. Instead, the latest survey still estimates 2.79 lakh stray dogs. Either dogs are being counted repeatedly, records are grossly inflated, animals from neighbouring areas are constantly replacing sterilised ones, or the programme has been poorly executed. Whatever the explanation, taxpayers deserve answers.

Independent scrutiny is essential before restarting Bengaluru's sterilisation programme

The programme's weaknesses are well known. Poor monitoring of NGOs, inadequate record-keeping, interrupted contracts, questionable surgical standards, insufficient post-operative care, and the absence of rigorous performance audits have repeatedly been flagged. The Minister has directed that annual sterilisation targets be doubled from 45,000 to 90,000 and warned officers of disciplinary action for poor performance. Accountability is welcome, but increasing targets without addressing the structural flaws risks repeating the mistakes. Experience shows that routine warnings have zero impact on complacent officers; if Byre Gowda truly means business, he must initiate exemplary punitive action as a deterrent.

The GBA should suspend the programme briefly, commission an independent scientific audit, verify sterilisation records, examine the performance of every participating NGO, and identify operational gaps before resuming work. The programme requires a scientific reset before fresh targets are announced. Unless all loopholes are plugged, Bengaluru will spend several hundred crores more over the next two decades only to find the stray dog population unchanged.

A NEW BLUEPRINT

Future-proofing India's real estate

Designing buildings for efficiency today will significantly reduce long-term climate and financial costs

MANISH DUBEY AND AMIR BAZAZ

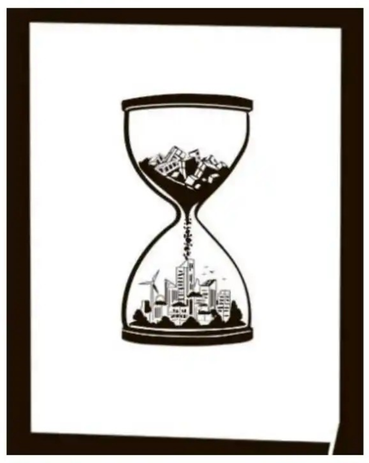
India's building boom is too big to ignore. The real estate sector accounts for nearly 8% of GDP, a large share of investment, employment and household savings, and is set to add more than two billion square feet over the next two decades. It already drives more than a third of India's energy use and accounts for a substantial portion of the country's carbon profile. It is expected to grow from its current $0.3 trillion to around $1 trillion by 2030. How this new space is delivered will shape the country's environmental footprint, the reliability and risk profile of power, water and basic services, and, over time, the environmental and financial risk baked into balance sheets and how easily projects and portfolios can attract capital.

At its heart, real estate is about flows of materials, energy, water, and waste through buildings. Today, projects are still planned mainly to hit a price point and a deadline. What they will cost to run in a hotter, more volatile climate is often treated as tomorrow's problem. The result is not neutral. It is a stock of assets that lock in higher operating expenses, are more exposed to heat, flooding and service disruptions, and sit uneasily with tightening disclosure and ESG expectations.

A better way to see what is at stake is to think of real estate as part of a larger metabolism. Every project draws in cement, steel, glass, and other materials, and pushes out construction and demolition waste. Once occupied, it demands electricity and water every day. At the city scale, these flows shape peak power demand, water stress, and the severity of local climate impacts. When buildings are inefficient, this metabolism runs hot: grids strain on summer evenings, utilities struggle to keep up, and any disruption hits harder because underlying demand is too high.

The next phase of the boom, therefore, cannot be judged only by how much is constructed, but by how each new building behaves inside this metabolism. Three shifts are central: how we build, how buildings perform, and how they connect to power systems.

The first shift starts at the site gate. Materials and construction practices are often treated as execution details, but they determine a significant part of the long-term footprint and risk profile. Construction heavy in cement, steel, and glass embeds emissions and future regulatory exposure before tenants move in. Poorly handled sites generate dust and debris, trigger local anger, and invite crackdowns that developers cannot predict or price. Sloppy C&D waste management creates liabilities as landfills fill up, and dumping in wetlands and low-lying areas comes under scrutiny.



The second shift concerns what buildings do over the decades they are occupied. The distinction here is between assets that are "less bad" and assets that are genuinely high-performing. The latter are designed around clear outcomes in energy and water use – kilowatt-hours per square metre, litres per person per day, limits on peak load – rather than around a checklist of green features.

Super-efficient approaches – already being pursued by several Indian pioneers – use climate-responsive form and envelope to cut cooling demand, specify efficient systems and controls so that low consumption is built in, and design water systems to ease pressure on stressed municipal supply and groundwater. This kind of design can reduce energy by 30-50% and water use by 20-30% compared to conventional buildings, without increasing overall project costs if timely choices are made. Crucially, such approaches track how the building performs once occupied and treat those numbers as part of its identity, turning efficiency from a marketing claim into a measurable characteristic that can be compared, financed, and regulated.

Early adoption matters

The third shift is about how buildings and power systems see each other. India's electricity mix is adding more renewables, which means greater variability and a premium on flexibility. A city full of heavy, leaky buildings demanding maximum cooling simultaneously is a recipe for higher system costs and more frequent stress events. A city where large parts of the stock are efficient, mostly electric and designed to keep peaks under control is much easier and cheaper to serve with a cleaner grid. In that world, buildings are no longer just points of demand; they are easier partners for rooftop solar where it makes sense, for green power contracts where it does not, and for demand-response schemes that smooth out peaks.

So far, much of this adjustment has been framed as an obligation. That is one reason it is resisted. Yet policy and finance are steadily moving towards closer scrutiny of building performance, ESG disclosures, and climate risk. The real question for the sector is how well it prepares for this shift, and how early it chooses to align with it.

Moving early will allow firms to spread the cost of adaptation across a pipeline of projects, build internal capabilities, and demonstrate a credible record. Waiting until new standards and market norms are in place risks having to retrofit under time pressure, with fewer options and a higher chance of assets being marked down as laggards.

Managing the real-estate metabolism goes beyond environmental concern; it is about prudent risk management and long-term value protection. India will build an extraordinary amount of space in the next two decades. The sector can continue to add square footage that looks good on launch day, but becomes steadily harder to operate in a changing climate and regulatory landscape. Or it can use the same investment wave to create assets that are tuned to the emerging economy: lighter on systems, easier on cities, and more durable on balance sheets.

(Manish is Dean and Rahul Bajaj Chair, School of Governance, and Amir is Associate Dean, School of Systems and Infrastructure, Indian Institute for Human Settlements [IIHS])

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

To my sister, with love

Each time her students left for new horizons, a part of her left with them

SUDHA DEVI NAYAK

It was a long day's journey into the night as the doctor emerged from the ICU to tell us she was no more. A heartrending moment when the ties of a lifetime forged at birth just gave way. It was as though I had lost a slice of my childhood – my growing years with their joys and sorrows, aspirations and angst.

So much of a shared life, so much of our collective lives before we branched off into our separate lives. One of six siblings, she lived life on her own terms, fiercely independent and beholden to none except the commands of her conscience. She lived in single blessedness, not giving in to social pressures or familial persuasions.

Unacademically brilliant, she was not one for the classroom mechanics of examinations and assessments, where she figured she was just average, but she spoke and wrote with a tremendous flair for words and feel for language. Her style – crisp, laundered saris with not a pleat out of place, strategically pinned – lent itself to her words, which were succinct, forthright, and hitting the nails where they should. Also being of frail health, knowing she could not cope with the grinding schedule of routine jobs strapped to a desk, she opted to run a coaching centre at her own home to her own regimen. Her young students adored her, and when they walked out to corporate jobs and coveted services and distant worlds for academic pursuits, she had reasons to be proud and fulfilled. A little part of her went out with them.

When people ignored her or excluded her, she moved on with composure and amused tolerance. Today, we stand in grief at her untimely passing, regretting lost opportunities to bond with her better, missing out on that group call, postponing that visit, and that misunderstanding that should never have been that thoughtless gesture or word. Wanton thoughts but loving her even more in her passing, recalling her humour, her generosity and her courage in life's various vicissitudes. Grief has no timeline, and healing is not a linear process. Grief is a moment that will recur over and over, and what is grief if not love persevering? Grief is also the moment of awakening, the consciousness of our own mortality and the realisation of how fragile and transitory life can be.

True grief is love; there can be no easy closure, no glib condolences or presumptuous words of comfort. Since the day we were born, death has always been on the cards, and yet we live in denial. Life does not go on forever, and 'the only way to die is to be remembered.' She went quietly, unobtrusively, as she had lived into that invisible roll call where good people are remembered for their goodness, courage and resilience. My sister, vibrant and alive, has become a memory and will with days, turn to a luminous reminiscence, forever loved and missed.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Scientific planning can avert water crisis

I refer to 'Kharif sowing slumps 23% as monsoon remains weak' (July 1). The report highlights Karnataka's worsening agricultural and water crisis. A 23% decline in kharif sowing, a 42% rainfall deficit, and major reservoirs holding only 22% of their capacity, with just 44 tmc ft of live storage, threaten both food security and drinking water supplies. With four major reservoirs in the Krishna basin receiving no inflows, the situation calls for immediate and scientific intervention. The government should issue district-specific crop advisories discouraging water-intensive crops such as paddy in severely rain-deficient regions and promote short-duration, drought-tolerant millets, pulses and oilseeds. Farmers should be provided with quality contingency seeds, weather-based advisories, micro-irrigation support, and expedited crop insurance settlements. Simultaneously, drinking water must receive the highest priority.

K V Chandramouli, Mysuru

Governance failure

Apropos 'The moral reckoning in governance failures' (July 1), as rightly observed, the plunder is not limited to material assets but also amounts to the demolition of civilisational and spiritual traditions by the very people who claim to defend them. What is even more galling is that the eight arrested employees are merely a symptom of a general malaise. It has far wider significance, reflecting the erosion of the human value system that afflicts society.

H R Bapu Satyanarayana, Mysuru

Education, not business

The growing commercialisation of school education is a cause for great concern. Education shapes responsible citizens, promotes equality, and prepares children for the future. Unfortunately, in recent years, education has increasingly become a business rather than a service. Many private institutions charge exorbitant fees, making quality education inaccessible to families from middle- and lower-income backgrounds. Parents often struggle to meet these financial demands, while children bear the burden of unnecessary competition and academic pressure. Schools should be places for providing quality teaching and inculcating moral values, creativity, and life skills; they are not profit-making enterprises. Governments must strengthen public education, and regulate unreasonable fee structures.

Shivayogi M V, Molakalmuru

Our readers are welcome to email letters to: **letters@deccanherald.co.in** (only letters emailed – not handwritten – will be accepted). All letters must carry the sender's postal address and phone number.

SPEAK OUT

The AAP is true *sanatani*. For the BJP, Lord Ram is just a means to gain power, and money.

Arvind Kejriwal, AAP national convenor

Religion is regarded by the common people as true, by the wise as false, and by the rulers as useful.

Lucius Annaeus Seneca

TO BE PRECISE

IN PERSPECTIVE

What proves you are Indian?

No document is conclusive evidence of your citizenship. That is a constitutional crisis hiding in plain sight

SHUBHAM KASHYAP KALITA

Recently, a senior official from the Ministry of External Affairs made a point lawmakers have repeatedly made, and citizens have been oblivious to: An Indian passport is a travel document. It attests to your nationality when you cross a border. Under the country's laws, it is not proof of a person's citizenship. The statement sparked social media furore. However, the storm missed the point entirely. The scandal is not that the government said it now. The scandal is that, seven decades after the Constitution came into force, India has yet to designate a single document as conclusive proof of citizenship – a gap that affects millions.

This is because Article 5 of the Constitution grants citizenship at commencement, and the Citizenship Act of 1955, which governs the acquisition and termination of citizenship. The Act is precise about how citizenship is gained – by birth, descent, registration, or naturalisation – but silent on how it is to be shown once obtained. It creates no certificate of citizenship, no citizens' register. It empowers the Central government to frame rules, but as of June 2026, no nationwide evidentiary framework has been established.

What exists is a patchwork. The Aadhaar card – issued to over 1.3 billion residents – is proof of identity and residence, not citizenship. The Supreme Court in the Bihar electoral rolls case last August confirmed this point. The voter ID establishes electoral eligibility; the PAN card is a fiscal instrument. The birth certificate, the closest approximation, records the fact of birth but not the citizenship status of the parents.

Regarding the passport, Section 6(2)(a) of the Passports Act, 1967, requires the issuing authority to verify citizenship before granting a passport. The MEA's position is therefore paradoxical: if the state has already satisfied itself of citizenship before issuing the document, why cannot the passport serve as evidence of that fact? The answer is in Section 17 of the same Act, which states that the passport shall always be the property of the Central government, and in the legal exceptions under which the holders of passports who are aliens, diplomatic couriers, for example, or people travelling on special authorisation, may lawfully have passports. Because non-citizens can, in narrow circumstances, hold Indian travel documents, the passport cannot serve as conclusive domestic proof. Moreover, the passport is revocable – it may be impounded, and it expires. Citizenship, on the other hand, is a legal status, which is continuous, diffuse and, until it is terminated, indefinite.

Lessons from NRC

The distinction between status and evidence of status is well understood in constitutional law; the dangers of the latter's absence are less so. The National Register of Citizens exercise in Assam – subsequently proposed at the national level – demonstrated this starkly. When the burden of proof rests on the individual, as it did on 1.9 million people who were dropped from the Assam NRC, the absence of a reliable evidentiary framework does not produce neutral outcomes. It entrenches exclusion along lines of poverty, religion, and ethnicity, falling hardest on those least able to bear it.

In February 2020, the Ministry of Home Affairs in Parliament said that the voter card, passport, Aadhaar, PAN card, and birth certificate were not definitive proofs of citizenship and that the question is dealt with solely under the Citizenship Act, 1955. A Press Information Bureau FAQ released in December 2019 admitted that there were no documents as yet finalised to prove citizenship under a nationwide NRC. Six years on, they remain undecided.

This is untenable. A democracy founded on universal adult suffrage and the rule of law cannot simultaneously demand that citizens prove their citizenship and decline to specify how that proof must be furnished. The MEA official's candour is welcome, but candour without remedy is a mere diagnosis. What is needed is legislation, or at a minimum, a statutory framework under the Citizenship Act: a clear, accessible, non-discriminatory evidentiary standard; procedural safeguards for those who cannot meet it through no fault of their own; a quasi-judicial adjudication mechanism with a right of appeal; and an explicit bar on using the process as a tool of exclusion.

In the absence of such a framework, the Government of India will keep telling citizens what does not constitute proof of who they are. The minimum that citizens can demand from their government is clarity on what does.

(The writer is an assistant professor of Law at Manipal University, Jaipur)

As power corridors expand, Gujarat's farmers push back

DATELINE Ahmedabad

SATISH JHA

For the past fortnight, farmers in Gujarat's Morbi district have been protesting against the installation of electricity transmission towers and high-tension power lines across their agricultural land. Similar protests have also surfaced in other parts of the state, where transmission corridors are being laid through vast stretches of farmland.

Although the protests have not been centrally organised, farmers in small groups have been opposing the installation of transmission lines across Kutch, Saurashtra, central and south Gujarat, where the high-tension power corridors are planned to pass through agricultural land. In some places, such as Kutch, the protests have continued for months.

Farmers allege that the power infrastructure is being built without their consent and that, in many cases, local authorities, with police support, are coercing them into allowing the work.

They are also agitated over what they describe as inadequate compensation. Farm leaders quip that, in the absence of a uniform compensation policy, the amount paid often depends on the level of resistance mounted by farmers.

Jetpar in Morbi district has emerged as the epicentre of the farmers' agitation in the past two weeks. Farmers here have been on an indefinite hunger strike, protesting against the installation of a transmission line by Halvad Transmission Ltd, a firm owned by Adani Energy Solutions Ltd (AESL) of Adani Group.

The company has been issuing notices to farmers whose land falls along the route of the Khavda Pooling Station Phase-III transmission line, which is being developed to evacuate 7 GW of renewable energy under the Government of India's interstate and intrastate transmission schemes.

Khavda is situated close to the India-Pakistan international border, where Adani Group is developing what it describes as the world's largest renewable energy park.

In one such notice, a farmer was informed that the government had granted the Adani Group's Halvad Transmission Ltd permission to use a portion of his land for erecting a transmission tower and creating a corridor for stringing overhead conductors.

The notice stated that compensation would be paid in accordance with the guidelines prescribed by the Gujarat government.

"I have objected to the notice but don't think it will have any impact. Either the government should not enter my farm or if they do, they should give us reasonable compensation," said the farmer.

Several factors are being cited for the growing protests, but the primary grievances are inadequate compensation, the perceived decline in land value due to the permanent installation of power infrastructure, and the alleged high-handedness of authorities in pressuring farmers to allow the use of their land.

"There is no clear government policy ensuring fair compensation for land affected by high-tension transmission lines. The compensation often depends on the extent of resistance put up by farmers. This issue has troubled farmers for years, but today they are more aware of their legal rights and are fighting to protect their land. Their protest is based on the genuine losses they will suffer because of the installation of such power infrastructure," said Sagar Rabari, a farmer leader and former Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader.

Rabari said the installation of transmission towers and overhead power lines significantly reduces the market value of agricultural land. "Such land cannot be easily converted for non-agricultural use, and even if it is, the presence of overhead transmission lines diminishes its commercial value," he said.

The company did not respond to requests for comment, while the government has remained tight-lipped on the issue. In a press note issued in 2023, the company said Halvad Transmission Ltd, a special purpose vehicle (SPV), had been set up to evacuate 7GW of renewable energy from the Khavda Renewable Energy Park under the Phase III Part A package.

"AESL would be investing Rs 3,000 crore to build, own, operate and maintain the 301 km transmission project for a period of 35 years. It also said that the Halvad transmission line, part of the National Grid, will help evacuate 7GW of RE by connecting Khavda to Halvad.

The protests, however, remain fragmented, with farmers' bodies and local groups leading the agitation without any centralised coordination. This is largely due to political differences between the opposition Congress and the AAP.

Earlier, on June 15, a large number of farmers from across Gujarat took out a tractor rally, Kisan Adhikar Yatra, in Ahmedabad to protest the use of their land for power transmission lines and press for other demands.

The rally, organised by the Congress with support from the AAP, lost momentum by the end of the day amid differences between the two parties and other organisational issues.

Since then, several local groups and individuals, especially in the Morbi district, have taken the lead in organising the protests independently, without direct backing from any political party.

The protest sites prominently display notices declaring them off-limits to representatives of all political parties, underscoring the organisers' attempts to keep the agitation non-political.

With the Gujarat Assembly elections due next year, a statewide farmers' movement driven not only by opposition to power transmission projects but also by demands for a guaranteed minimum support price (MSP), better implementation of the crop insurance scheme, and concerns arising from the ongoing monsoon season could further deepen anti-incumbency sentiment against the government. **DHNS**

Around the world, governments have sought to protect forests through conservation laws, carbon markets and afforestation. A small Canadian town has now ventured into a more radical idea: that trees deserve rights of their own

EPHRAT LIVNI

The town's mayor, Michel Bourdeau (sitting, extreme right), said adopting the resolution was not merely symbolic. NYT

Who speaks for the trees? A tiny Quebec town

The small town of Terrasse-Vaudreuil, Quebec, was carved out of the forest about 75 years ago. But until recently, the trees had no rights.

A few countries and local jurisdictions around the world have recognized the rights of nature to varying degrees. This town of about 2,000, just west of Montreal, is the first governing body to adopt the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Trees, according to the global environmental law tracker, Eco Jurisprudence Monitor. The resolution recognises that trees, as living beings, have the right to exist, thrive and receive protections in the law.

"If we live in Terrasse-Vaudreuil, it's because we love trees," said Sylvie Trépanier, a member of the town's environmental committee, which drove the resolution. "We want to keep what we have."

Trees, please

Last spring, about 60 residents attended a screening of *Des Arbres et Des Arts*, or *The Trees and the Arts*, a documentary by the Quebec filmmaker André Desrochers that proposes trees should receive legal rights. "We decided we really need to do something," Trépanier said.

The town's environmental committee wrote a proposal to prioritize tree protection for the health of the canopy and the broader community, and it gained widespread support.

When councillors adopted the resolution unanimously, Mayor Michel Bourdeau declared, "Today, we affirm that trees are not merely a backdrop in our community. They are indispensable allies for our health, our climate resilience, and our quality of life."

The Universal Declaration on the Rights of Trees was drafted in France in 2018 and 2019 by lawyers, ecologists and lawmakers. It mandates that humanity "act with the Tree in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity" and has been presented as a petition to the United Nations and the European Parliament, among others.

Adopting the resolution was not merely symbolic, Bourdeau said in an interview. In Terrasse-Vaudreuil, practically, the resolution requires the town to prioritise canopy protection across all municipal planning. The next step is to review existing regulations and strengthen tree protections, the mayor said, followed by plans to plant and distribute trees to schools, businesses and residents in an ongoing effort to protect and diversify what has now been deemed a collective asset.

What precisely this will all mean when put into law — whether it will require simple replacement of trees, limits on development or on cutting down trees — remains to be decided.

The resolution was an easy sell in Terrasse-Vaudreuil. "There were not people who were resistant. On the contrary, they welcomed it."

Standing for nature

The notion that trees could have legal rights is alien to many and an affront to some, which is why the town's move has generated international headlines and anger.

Critics see granting rights to nature as a threat to humanity's ability to extract resources or develop.

In an article in *The National Review*, Wesley J Smith, a senior fellow at the Discovery Institute's Center on Human Exceptionalism, called the nature rights movement a "subversive ideology" and described the town's legal strategy plainly: "It is an inch by inch, step by step tactic," Smith wrote. "One small town today, a city, province, or country tomorrow, and eventually, an international treaty."

This month, a bill was introduced in the British Parliament to recognise the rights of nature. More than three dozen communities in the United States, and a handful in Canada, Mexico, Peru, Australia, Ireland, and Northern Ireland have adopted laws or nonbinding resolutions recognising such rights, according to Mari Margil, who heads the Center for Democratic and Environmental Rights. And Ecuador enshrined rights of nature in its Constitution in 2008.

The town's environmental committee wrote a proposal to prioritise tree protection for the health of the canopy and the broader community, and it gained widespread support. Nature has long been considered property in legal systems around the world and treated as a resource. The rights of nature movement advances laws recognising nature's independent right to exist, thrive and regenerate.

In 2008, the organisation Margil leads worked with delegates to Ecuador's constitutional convention to develop rights of nature provisions.

Since then, laws and court rulings in Panama, Colombia, Bolivia, Uganda, Bangladesh, and Spain "have recognised that nature possesses legally enforceable rights — including the most basic of rights, the right to exist," she wrote. "This is a movement that has grown quickly," she added.

But it took decades to gain traction.

Once unthinkable

"Throughout legal history, each successive extension of rights to some new entity has been, theretofore, a bit unthinkable," wrote Christopher D Stone in a 1972 *Southern California Law Review* article proposing legal rights for "natural objects" like trees.

He argued that "the rightlessness of rightless 'things'" seems inherent or fundamentally true, rather than "a legal convention acting in support of some *status quo*." Just as laws denying rights to women, children and people of various abilities, races, ethnicities, nationalities and religions were once considered just before becoming unacceptable, views on nature could similarly change, Stone suggested.

"It is no answer to say that streams and forests cannot have standing because streams and forests cannot speak," he wrote. "Corporations cannot speak either; nor can states, estates, infants, incompetents, municipalities or universities. Lawyers speak for them."

The notion that trees could have legal rights is alien to many and an affront to some, which is why the town's move has generated international headlines and anger.

That same year, United States Supreme Court Justice William Douglas echoed this view, dissenting in a case that ruled the Sierra Club lacked standing to challenge development in California's Sequoia National Forest. Justice Douglas argued people should be able to sue on behalf of "environmental objects" for their preservation, and that if inanimate objects, like ships, can be parties in litigation, "so it should be as respects valleys, alpine meadows, rivers, lakes, estuaries, beaches, ridges, groves of trees, swampland, or even air that feels the destructive pressures of modern technology and modern life."

The justice's stance more than a half century ago is "still pretty far out," said Carl R Gold, a Maryland lawyer and naturalist who has written about tree rights. But he praised Terrasse-Vaudreuil for taking "a terrific first step."

"Trees need someone to speak up for them," he said.

The idea of granting rights to trees may still seem unconventional, even impractical, to many. Whether the rights of trees become widely recognised or remain largely symbolic, the debate itself is significant.

The New York Times

Time to withdraw the anti-conversion law in Karnataka

PETER MACHADO

The Karnataka Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Act, 2022, has failed to achieve its stated objective. What should have been a time of peace and fraternity has instead become an era of fear, harassment, and repeated humiliation for many.

The law was enacted by the previous Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in December 2021 amid strong protests, particularly from the Congress, which rightly voiced the legitimate fears of religious minorities, especially the Christian community. Soon after, Congress leaders made solemn public promises. Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah declared the Bill anti-constitutional and assured that it would be scrapped within a week of coming to power. D K Shivakumar pledged that the Congress would stand firmly by the Christian community. Trusting these assurances, arguably people voted in large numbers, contributing to the Congress's return to power.

Three years have now passed, but that promise remains unfulfilled. Though the Cabinet resolved on June 15, 2023, to repeal the Protection of Right to Freedom of Religion Act, 2022, the law continues to cast its shadow over churches, prayer halls, and families.

The Congress government has both the political mandate and the legislative numbers to keep its promise. It should honour that commitment without further delay.

What is painful is the human cost this Act has inflicted. Reports indicate 69 incidents in Karnataka in 2025 alone. Peaceful prayers have been disrupted, often by organised groups. Instead of protecting the victims of intimidation or assault, the police frequently turn on the worshippers themselves — demanding permissions that the Constitution does not require, registering cases, and issuing threats.

Many suffer in silence, afraid to raise their voice lest greater trouble follow. It is a tragedy that, since the invocation of this law, violence against Christians has increased while the perpetrators often escape accountability. The law has reversed the very order of justice: victims are scrutinised and accused, while those who barge into places of worship and disrupt sacred gatherings operate with impunity. Eleven cases registered against Christians in 2025 reveal a disturbing pattern of misuse.

This is not protection; it is persecution dressed in legal language. The Act appears to have normalised the criminalisation of ordinary religious practice. The Act is not only unnecessary but deeply unjust. It is vague in its terms, prone to arbitrary enforcement, and strikes at the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution — rights to freedom of religion, conscience, and personal liberty. It casts suspicion on legitimate religious activity, charitable works, and even the personal choices of marriage and family life.

In the case of interfaith marriages, it has created an atmosphere of fear and surveillance. With regard to women, it has enabled moral policing and control over their conscience and autonomy under the false guise of protection. Nine court cases filed in this context during 2025 alone bear testimony to this reality. This law has legitimised suspicion where there should be trust, and intrusion where there should be respect for the sanctity of conscience. It wounds the soul of our democracy.

The Congress government in Karnataka, which has long professed secular values, must act with courage and compassion and repeal this unconstitutional and draconian law without further delay. The government must act to restore the confidence of the Christian community. Tamil Nadu, where a similar law was repealed in 2006 after protests, sets us an example. The state government must remain a dependable guardian of constitutional rights and minority dignity, as many have experienced in Kerala.

The issue is no longer about the better implementation of the law but about whether it should remain on the statute books at all. Its vague provisions, documented misuse and chilling effect on religious freedom make a compelling case for repeal. With a clear legislative majority and an earlier public commitment to withdraw the Act, the Karnataka government has both the authority and the responsibility to act. Repealing the law would reaffirm the state's commitment to constitutional rights, the rule of law and equal protection for all citizens.

(The writer is the Archbishop of Bengaluru)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 YEARS AGO: JULY 1976

Laldenga accepts Mizoram as part of India

New Delhi, July 1
The 10-year-old rebellion by the outlawed Mizo National Front, led by Laldenga, ended formally today with its leaders acknowledging that Mizoram is an integral part of India and agreeing to a settlement of all their problems within the framework of the Constitution of India. An agreement to this effect was reached today between a delegation of the underground MNF led by its president, Laldenga, and Union Home Secretary S. L. Khurana.

25 YEARS AGO: JULY 2001

Tamil Nadu Governor quits

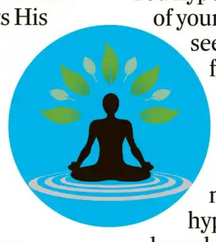
New Delhi, July 1
Tamil Nadu Governor Fathima Beevi resigned in Chennai today shortly after the Union Cabinet decided to recall her for having "failed to discharge Constitutional obligations" after the arrest of former Chief Minister M Karunanidhi and two Union Cabinet Ministers in Chennai yesterday. Ms Beevi, a former Supreme Court judge and National Human Rights Commission member, sent her resignation to President K R Narayanan soon after an emergency meeting of the Cabinet decided to recommend her recall.

OASIS | DOROTHY VICTOR

A lesson in humility at Mass

It started as a typical Eucharistic Celebration, commonly known to Catholics as Mass. The communal service followed its standard, beautiful rhythm: scripture readings, a homily, prayers, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. During this sacred commemoration of the Last Supper, the priest invokes the power of the Holy Spirit, changing the presented bread and wine into the true Body and Blood of Christ. But that day, the liturgy became deeply personal. Through the priest's moving reflection on the day's Gospel passage, I received a transformative lesson in humility and holiness.

The reading was the text from the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 7, verses 1 to 5. In this section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus exhorts His disciples to be tolerant of others and to look inward. It reads: "Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."



Listening closely, the message became clear. Dwelling on the faults and shortcomings of others is not only uncharitable but also hypocritical when we fail to acknowledge our own imperfections.

I understood that genuine transformation begins with honest self-examination and the humility to correct our own failings. This vital shift from harsh judgment to sincere self-correction ultimately frees our hearts from hypocrisy and draws us closer to God each day.

Known as the parable of the mote and the beam, this enduring teaching illustrates the absolute importance of sincere and serious self-examination. The "mote" represents a small, insignificant flaw; while the "beam" signifies a much larger personal fault or sin.

By reforming ourselves first, we cultivate humility, overcome hypocrisy, grow in holiness and draw closer to God. I left the church that day with this truth echoing in my heart.

Russia begins importing petrol from India amid fuel shortages

At least 60k tonnes shipped as Moscow seeks to offset disruptions from refinery strikes

REUTERS

Russia has started seaborne imports of petrol from India, two industry sources said on Wednesday, in an effort to mitigate fuel shortages triggered by Ukrainian attacks on its energy infrastructure.

Fuel shortages are being felt across Russia's 11 time zones with rationing, long queues at filling stations, and a record petrol price increase.

The Kremlin said on Tuesday that Russia was in contact with other countries and discussing imports of fuel at acceptable prices.

Russia's Energy Ministry and India's Oil Ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

An industry source said at least 60,000 metric tons of gasoline have been dispatched from India to Russia. Another source said that two tankers, with parcels of 30,000-40,000 tons each, have been sent.

A third source said that in total, Russia plans to import 400,000 tons of petrol from various countries each month, including from neighbouring Belarus, which has already been exporting fuel to Russia.

Petrol consumption in Russia is at least 110,000 tons per day in summer, when demand for fuel is high.

It is not clear which Indian refiner will be supplying gasoline to Russia. President Vladimir Putin acknowledged on Sunday at a meeting with government ministers and other officials that Ukrainian drone strikes on oil refineries had triggered fuel shortages in some regions, but said that Russia was dealing with them.

Belarus almost tripled petrol rail supplies to Russia to more than 70,000 tons in the first half of June versus the first half of May, according to Reuters calculations and sources.

Russia's parliament approved amendments to its tax code last week aimed at tackling the fuel shortages due to Ukrainian drone attacks, while also offering subsidies on fuel imports, pegged to Indian delivery costs and prices.

India's crude oil imports from Russia surged to a record high in June, ship-tracking data from LSEG and Kpler showed, as refiners snapped up Russian barrels to mitigate the impact of the Strait of Hormuz closure on other sources of supply.

Russian oil accounted for more than half of India's overall imports in June, up from 36.5% in May, the Kpler data showed.

India, the world's third-largest oil importer, received about 2.7 million barrels per day of oil from Russia in June, preliminary data from Kpler and LSEG showed.

Ex-KCCI chief's land attached for funding separatist activities

SRINAGAR, DHNS: The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Wednesday attached the immovable property of former Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) president Dr Mubeen Ahmed Shah, the latest action in the Centre's post-2019 crackdown on individuals accused of supporting separatist activities through financial and ideological networks.

The property was attached by the Counter Intelligence Kashmir (CIK), the intelligence wing of the J&K Police, in connection with FIR No 07/2020 registered at Police Station CIK.

A CIK team attached 12 marlas of land belonging to Shah at Buchwara, Dalgate.

The attachment comes six months after a Special NIA Court in Srinagar declared Shah and two others proclaimed offenders in the case and warned that failure to appear before the court could lead to the attachment of their properties.

In December last year, the Special NIA Court issued a proclamation under Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure against Shah, California-based architect Azizul Hassan Ashai alias Tony Ashai and Rifat Wani in connection with the same FIR being investigated by the CIK.

The court had directed the trio to appear before it on January 31, 2026.

Plea in SC seeks rules for digital content, stand-up comedy

ASHISH TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking a comprehensive regulatory framework for stand-up comedy, podcasts, live-streaming platforms and other user-generated digital content, highlighting the growing challenges posed by algorithmic amplification in the digital age.

The petition, filed under Article 32 of the Constitution by advocate Vishal Tiwari, argued that while artistic freedom and satire must be protected, the rapid virality of controversial or misleading content on social media platforms necessitates institutional safeguards to protect dignity, consent, public morality and constitutional values under Articles 14, 19 and 21.

The plea drew heavily from the recent "Rs 370 Biryani" controversy, in which a stand-up comedy show hosted by Pranit More featured an audience member's remark about feeling entitled to sex after spending Rs 370 on biryani for a woman on a date.

The clip went massively viral, triggering widespread debate.

The petitioner clarified that the episode should not invite penal action against comedians, but underscored how digital platforms can transform isolated statements into nationwide discourse.

The PIL also referred to the Ranveer Allahbadia and "India's Got Latent" controversies, and complaints of insensitive jokes targeting persons with disabilities.

Among the key reliefs sought is the constitution of an expert committee to inquire into the misleading material related to the All India Judges' Badminton Championship; the formation of an independent judicial commission by Centre to examine safeguards for children below 16 years; age verification on social media; and responsible online conduct.

TN moves Supreme Court against Madras HC's blanket ban on cow slaughter

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The Tamil Nadu government has approached the Supreme Court challenging the Madras High Court's sweeping order imposing a complete ban on the slaughter of cows and calves in the state, terming it a case of judicial legislation that overrides existing statutes.

In its special leave petition filed on June 9, the state argued that the High Court's May 27 order, passed on the eve of Bakrid, runs contrary to the Tamil Nadu Animal Preservation Act, 1958, which explicitly permits the slaughter of cows above 10 years of age that are unfit for work, subject to certification by competent authority.

Other laws, including the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and state-specific urban local body regulations, lay down conditions for slaughter but do not impose a total prohibition, it contended.

A division bench comprising Justices G R Swaminathan and V Lakshminarayan passed the order while hearing a public interest litigation.

The petitioner had primarily sought directions to restrict slaughter to designated places. The High Court, however, went further by banning cow and calf slaughter anywhere in the state on any day.

The state strongly objected to this expansion of relief, contending that the court granted relief that was neither pleaded nor prayed for. It also criticised the High Court for relying on a Government Order (GO No. 1715) emphasising the need to ban cow slaughter to improve milk production and the rural economy.

"When the legislation permits the slaughter of a particular category of cows in designated places, a judicial direction contradicting the statutory provision cannot be sustained," the state argued.

MISCELLANY

◆ COMICS ◆

Blondie

HI, MR. B.! I'M ON SPRING BREAK
SPRING BREAK? WEREN'T YOU JUST ON WINTER BREAK?
THAT WAS JUST A WARMUP! THIS BREAK WILL GET US PREPPED FOR SUMMER VACAY! ALL OF THIS PLANNING IS HARD WORK!
YIKES! SPEAKING OF WORK!
POOR MR. B! HE COULD REALLY USE A BREAK!

Hagar The Horrible

I'M SORRY I'M IN THE HOSPITAL AND NOT IN YOUR CLASS ON CAREER DAY!
IT'S OK, DAD!
MY TEACHER SAID THE CLASS WILL LEARN MORE ABOUT VIKING LIFE BY SEEING YOU HERE!

Beetle Bailey

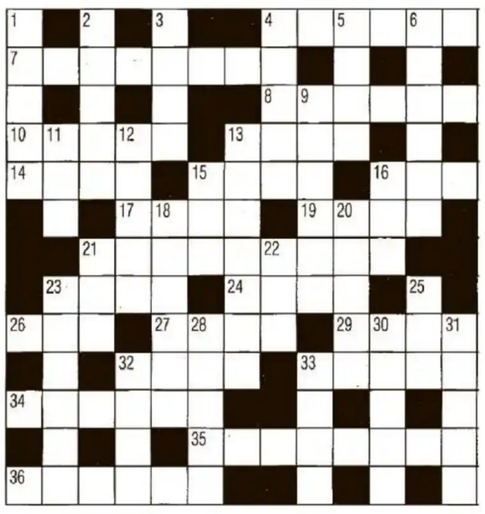
CAN YOU MAKE ME A PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY SANDWICH?
SURE, THAT'S EASY
SMOOTH, NOT CRUNCHY, PEACH JELLY, BUTTERED WHITE BREAD, CUT INTO QUARTERS, WITH THE CRUST CUT OFF...
MAKE IT YOURSELF
GREG TWORT WALKER

Peanuts

HERE'S THE WORLD WAR I FLYING ACE SOARING OVER THE FRONT LINES IN HIS SOPWITH CAMEL...
HE WAVES TO THE POOR BLIGHTERS IN THE TRENCHES BELOW
IN THEIR ADMIRATION FOR HIM THEY SHOWER HIM WITH GIFTS...
LIKE ROCKS!

Marvin

CROSSWORD CHALLENGE 12451



CRYPTIC

ACROSS
4 Composed poems about Land's End that may transport us (6)
7 Good name for a horsewoman? (8)
8 Flier hurt in a crash on the quiet (6)
10 Surviving a terrible evil (5)
13 A cuppa with the cleaner (4)
14 She appears in comedies (4)
15 Mum's letter means a lot (4)
16 In favour of getting paid (3)
17 Is it helping to clean up TV? (4)
19 Tartaric acid? (4)
21 Usually getting right away somewhere in Cambridgeshire (9)
23 Jaunty bit of counterpoint, possibly (4)
24 Translate into a little Italian (4)
26 Rather young? Yes, ten (3)
27 Cats find it frightfully disturbing (4)
29 He gave Abel stick, we hear (4)
32 Timber town? (4)
33 Author never edited (5)
34 The couple holding the boat up? (6)
35 Vine fruits (8)
36 Has fun manipulating levers (6)

DOWN
1 Food for certain days (5)
2 Masterly mix-up, this motto? (5)
3 Come and get it! (4)
4 Figures as a short subject (5)
5 Sound happy turning up with a posh car (4)
6 Leave many trees devastated! (6)
9 Accelerate out of Athens (6)
11 Left, for example, on one side (3)
12 Face-saving provision ñ for vision! (5)
13 London, it seems, has a mining centre (7)
15 In formation, it may be welcoming (3)
16 Seek to discover where to apply leverage? (3)
18 At the start, determined to get TV? (6)
20 Springs to mind she's in town, in Australia (5)
21 King of the canine kind? (3)
22 Nothing's held in trust if there's denial (3)
23 Would he plagiarise a tripe recipe? (6)
25 On the table, is this number a mere bagtelle? (3)
28 Slings one's hook, so to speak (5)
30 Bad ignition (5)
31 Interesting in various ways to a Yankee (5)
32 Rudimentary amount of money? (4)
33 Is a fondness for it calf love? (4)

EASY

ACROSS
4 Hammer-like tool (6)
7 In the open air (8)
8 Coils, spins (6)
10 Impressive collection (5)
13 Bring up (4)
14 Extending far down (4)
15 Inform (4)
16 Jewel (3)
17 Top of a house (4)
19 Rich soil (4)
21 Infamous (9)
23 Pious platitudes (4)
24 Mountain range (4)
26 Taxi (3)
27 Heinous (4)
29 Snare (4)
32 Broad toothy smile (4)
33 Stage whisper (5)
34 To badger (6)
35 Lock up (8)
36 Begrudge (6)

DOWN
1 Cold dish (5)
2 Burning, ablaze (5)
3 Extremely (4)
4 Driver's hotel (5)
5 Den (4)
6 High regard (6)
9 Beat soundly (6)
11 Agent (3)
12 Pinafore (5)
13 Chorus (7)
15 Also (3)
16 Household fuel (3)
18 Freshwater mammals (6)
20 Expels (5)
21 Arrest (3)
22 Unwell (3)
23 Type of glass container (6)
25 Stripling (3)
28 Call on (5)
30 Wash out (5)
31 Low-value coin (5)
32 Stare (4)
33 Bushy hairstyle (4)

SOLUTIONS TO CROSSWORD 12450

CRYPTIC
ACROSS: 1, Ta-ndem 7, Ex-tolled 8, V-is-a 10, Planed 11, Mar-in-e 14, I-Ke 16, Tenor 17, Sins 19, Ro-bed 21, B-as-ed 22, So-wed 23, Mush 26, Curio(-us) 28, GI-G 29, Hearts 30, Wallet 31, Asti 32, Fathere-d 33, Ernest.
DOWN: 1, Tempus 2, Dr-ink-s 3, Mead 4, Rota-Ted 5, Pla-i-n 6, Idler 8, V-ain 9, See 12, Red 13, Not-es 15, Roses 18, Is-Sue 19, RAW 20, Be-D 21, Bootees 22, Sir 23, Mi-lto-n. 24, Ugli 25, Hit out 26, Chaff(-inch) 27, Ratty 28, Gas 30, Wade.

EASY
ACROSS: 1, Mousse 7, Bull's-eye 8, Limb 10, Adores 11, Dosage 14, Set 16, Helen 17, Rate 19, Widow 21, Medal 22, Cuban 23, Poet 26, Alias 28, Pad 29, Lentil 30, Arrive 31, Loan 32, Emeralds 33, On edge.
DOWN: 1, Mohair 2, Soiree 3, Ebbs 4, Alcohol 5, Legal 6, Yemen 8, Lost 9, Met 12, Sew 13, Genie 15, Tidal 18, Ample 19, Web 20, Dan 21, Musical 22, Cat 23, Parade 24, Odin 25, Twelve 26, Alley 27, Inter 28, Pro 30, Also.

◆ SU-DO-KU-6947 ◆

1		7		5				8
					2		7	
			3			5	9	
3	8					6		
			8		4			
		4					8	5
	5	1			3			
	2		5					
9				2		8		1

hard

SOLUTION TO 6946

2	7	9	3	4	1	8	6	5
6	3	5	2	8	7	4	9	1
1	8	4	6	5	9	3	7	2
7	9	2	8	1	6	5	3	4
4	5	3	7	9	2	1	8	6
8	6	1	4	3	5	9	2	7
3	2	8	1	7	4	6	5	9
5	4	6	9	2	8	7	1	3
9	1	7	5	6	3	2	4	8

To solve the puzzle: To solve a su-do-ku puzzle, every digit from1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows, and in each of the nine boxes.

SCRABBLE™

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S1	E1	I1	U1	T1	S1	S1	RACK 1
Y4	L1	R1	N1	A1	E1	B3	Double Word Score — RACK 2
P3	E1	A1	D2	N1	N1	P3	Triple Word Score — RACK 3
Y4	U1	R1	T1	C3	N1	O1	RACK 4

PAR SCORE 145-155
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary. JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

V4	I1	S1	I1	O1	N1	S1	RACK 1 =	68
F4	L1	O1	S1	S1	E1	S1	RACK 2 =	80
C3	L1	E1	N1	C3	H4		RACK 3 =	14
O1	P3	E1	R1	A1	S1		RACK 4 =	8
E1	C3	O1	N1	O1	M3	Y4	RACK 5 =	64

PAR SCORE 150-160 — JUDD'S TOTAL 234

JUMBLE®

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

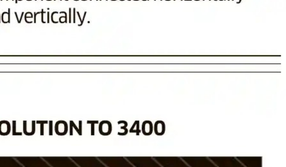
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SAETY

SAHHR

CNECTA

DVRRIE


It doesn't make any sense that you got poison ivy there.
I know! I don't get it.
12/20
HOW HE ENDED UP WITH POISON IVY ON HIS SCALP WAS A ---

Get the free JUST JUMBLE app • Follow us on Facebook

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers Tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: YACHT AFTER ICONIC EXODUS
Answer: One quality that helped Marie and Pierre make scientific discoveries was — "CURIE-OSITY"

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HITORI-3401

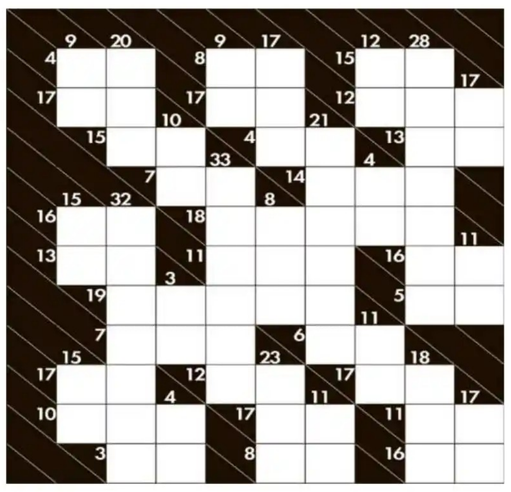
6	7	8	7	4	6	1	3
7	3	5	6	2	4	7	1
5	7	7	3	6	8	6	2
1	3	3	5	7	3	4	8
7	4	7	1	8	7	5	3
4	2	1	7	1	3	3	6
3	6	2	3	6	1	7	5
8	1	6	8	3	5	6	7

SOLUTION TO 3400

8	1	3	■	7	2	5	■
1	■	8	3	4	■	6	5
5	4	■	7	8	3	■	6
2	■	6	■	1	4	7	■
■	5	1	8	■	6	4	7
4	7	■	2	6	1	■	8
7	■	5	4	■	8	3	■
■	6	7	■	2	5	8	1

To solve the puzzle: Eliminate numbers by filling in squares so that remaining cells in that row or column do not repeat that number more than once. Filled-in cells cannot be horizontally or vertically adjacent. The un-filled cells must form a single component connected horizontally and vertically.

KAKURO- 3401



SOLUTION TO 3400

To solve the puzzle: Put a number from 1 through 9 in a cell. No zeros. A number in a cell separated by diagonal line tells the sum of numbers in consecutive cells at its right or downward. No number may appear more than once in consecutive cells.

SU DO KU X - 3964

■						8		9
	■	5					4	1
7		■		9	6	■		5
2			■		■			
		1		■				7
5	3	7	■		2			
9		■	3			■		4
4	1					■		
6					4		1	■

SOLUTION TO 3963

2	6	3	5	7	1	8	4	9
4	8	1	2	6	9	5	3	7
7	9	5	4	3	8	6	1	2
6	7	2	3	4	5	1	9	8
3	4	9	8	1	2	7	5	6
1	5	8	7	9	6	4	2	3
5	3	4	6	2	7	9	8	1
9	2	6	1	8	4	3	7	5
8	1	7	9	5	3	2	6	4

To solve the puzzle: The objective is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column, each 3x3 box and each shaded diagonal line contains the same number only once.

Victor Willis of The Village People performs during the 2017 Streamy Awards in Beverly Hills. AFP FILE

Village People lead singer Victor Willis dies at 74

WASHINGTON, AFP: Victor Willis, lead singer of the disco group Village People whose hit "Y.M.C.A." became a fixture at rallies for US President Donald Trump, has died, his spouse said in a Facebook post on Wednesday. He was 74.

"It is with profound sadness that I must announce the death of my husband, VICTOR WILLIS. Victor passed away on Tuesday June 30, 2026 as a result of a short, but aggressive illness," the post on Willis's official page said. The Texas-born musician co-founded Village People and co-wrote hits including "Y.M.C.A.", "In the Navy" and "Macho Man" that swept the world's dancefloors in the late 1970s.

Trump expressed his condolences on Wednesday and said Willis will be sorely missed. "He was a great and happy guy who loved that I used his groups song, YMCA, at my Rallies. It became a 'monster' hit, again, 30 years after its original launch," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

US, Iran enter technical talks to secure final deal

Very good meetings happening in Doha, says US President

DOHA/DUBAI, REUTERS/AFP

Israeli army tanks are positioned along the Israel-Lebanon border on Wednesday. AFP

The US and Iran held technical talks in Doha on Wednesday as they sought to agree on shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and secure a lasting ceasefire, a source with direct knowledge of the talks and an Iranian official said.

US President Donald Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner and envoy Steve Witkoff met the prime minister of Qatar — a mediator in the talks alongside Pakistan — to lay the groundwork for the negotiations, but would not be attending the discussions themselves, the source with direct knowledge of the talks said.

The talks are based on a 14-point interim accord signed last month that was intended to halt the war that began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran in February, reopen the Strait of Hormuz and establish 60 days of negotiations for a permanent peace deal.

However, the US and Iran have sparred publicly over the meaning of the interim pact, leading to tit-for-tat strikes over the past week.

Iran is determined to win international recognition of its control over the strait and its ability to levy fees on ships entering or leaving West Asian waters, even if it has to do so by force, two senior Iranian sources said on Wednesday.

Traffic has partially resumed through the strait, which handled one-fifth of global oil and liquefied natural gas trade before the war.

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump hailed the "progress" of indirect talks on Wednesday. The United States president said that there had been "very good meetings" in Doha after an early dispute over the format threatened to overshadow discussions.

Iran insisted there would be no direct negotiations between the sides in the Qatari capital on the two parties' memorandum of understanding aimed at ending the West Asia war, which broke out with US-Israeli strikes on Iran in late February.

"As far as things are going, the denuclearisation of Iran is moving along well," Trump told reporters as he prepared to board his Qatar-gifted Air Force One plane, which the wealthy Gulf emirate donated last year.

"We hit them very hard... but we're getting along very well."

Israel says troops to stay in Lebanon, Syria & Gaza

Israel's defence minister said Wednesday that Israeli forces would remain in so-called security zones established in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza "until further notice", AFP reports from Jerusalem.

"The IDF will remain in the security zones in Lebanon, Syria and Gaza until further notice, in order to protect Israel's residents and communities from jihadist terrorists," Israel Katz said, according to the defence ministry. Katz also reiterated an earlier warning to Iran, saying the Islamic republic would be struck with "full force" if it attacked Israel over its operations in Lebanon.

Nepal says ready to resolve border issue with India through talks

KATHMANDU, PTI: Nepal is always ready to resolve the border issue with India through diplomatic dialogue on the basis of historical agreements and maps, Foreign Minister Shisir Khanal said on Wednesday.

Responding to questions raised by lawmakers in the Upper House (National Assembly), Khanal also said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had already made public its detailed views regarding comments made by Prime Minister Balendra Shah during his address to Parliament in May.

"The Nepal government is always ready to resolve the border issue with India through diplomatic dialogue on the basis of historical agreements and maps, abiding by the spirit and sentiments of the close relations existing between Nepal and India," Khanal said.

Prime Minister Shah's statement on May 31 that Nepal had also encroached on Indian territory at different places and that the Himalayan nation had involved China and the UK to resolve the issue had sparked controversy. New Delhi categorically rejected any role for third parties in resolving the dispute. The statement also invited criticism from Nepal's opposition parties.

Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs later clarified in a statement that the prime minister was referring to cross-border occupation by people from both sides of the border.

WORLD AT A GLANCE

Two people display a banner reading, "When the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will know peace", atop the Empire State Building in New York City on Wednesday. They were later taken into police custody. REUTERS

US lifts restrictions on powerful AI models created by Anthropic

▸ Anthropic will soon begin restoring access globally to its most powerful AI models, Fable 5 and Mythos 5, after the US government lifted restrictions on where they could be released, AFP reports from San Francisco (US).

Over the past couple of weeks, the Trump administration has invoked national security concerns to limit the ability of major US technology companies to release advanced models, including those from Anthropic, which some researchers feared could be exploited to bypass cybersecurity measures. "We've received notice that the Department of Commerce has lifted export controls on Claude Fable 5 and Mythos 5," Anthropic posted on X. "We'll begin restoring access tomorrow."

France president poll dates set

▸ France will hold the first round of its next presidential election on April 18, 2027, with a run-off set for May 2, the government spokeswoman, Maud Bregeon, said on Wednesday following a cabinet meeting to officially approve the dates, Reuters reports from Paris.

The race to succeed President Emmanuel Macron — who cannot run again after two terms — is shaping up as a fragmented contest, with polls placing the far-right National Rally in a leading position, and a crowded field raising the prospect of a run-off dominated by political extremes.

Gurdwara demolished in Pak

▸ A decades-old historic gurdwara was demolished by a local businessman in Pakistan's Punjab province, sparking protests from the minority Sikh community, PTI reports from Lahore.

According to a Punjab government official, the historic Gurdwara Singh Sabha in Farooqabad, about 70 km from Lahore, was recently demolished by a local businessman. "The businessman demolished the gurdwara without obtaining the required No Objection Certificate from the department concerned," the official told PTI.

Kim Dotcom loses appeal

▸ New Zealand-based tech entrepreneur Kim Dotcom lost his latest court bid on Wednesday to avoid extradition to the US on fraud and money-laundering charges, AFP reports from Wellington.

Wellington's Court of Appeal declined Dotcom's application to overturn the justice minister's decision to sign an extradition order in 2024. The US wants the extradition of the founder of the Megaupload file-sharing system "to stand trial on charges of criminal copyright infringement, racketeering, and wire fraud", the court said.

Trump defends $1.2 bn crypto earnings

US President says his wealth gains stem from investments through blind trusts

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, AFP

TRUMP'S CRYPTO WINDFALL
Everybody's profiting... I'm profiting because I have a lot of money and a lot of cash.
Trump makes $1.2bn in 2025
Assets managed by blind trusts
$TRUMP Crypto currency
Royalties: $635 million
Linked to the $TRUMP cryptocurrency
Launched just before Trump's January 2025 inauguration
MAJOR SOURCES OF INCOME
World Liberty Financial
Nearly $550 million
Co-founded in September 2024 by Trump's sons and the son of Steve Witkoff
TRUMP'S NET WORTH GROWTH
2024 $2.3 bn
2026 $6.2 bn
Increase: Nearly threefold in two years

US President Donald Trump on Wednesday defended earning around $1.2 billion from his family's cryptocurrency activities last year, saying "everybody's profiting" from his time in power.

"You know why I'm profiting, because the stock market's going up, everybody's profiting," Trump told reporters as he prepared to take his first flight on a new Air Force One plane gifted by Qatar.

Asked about criticism that he was using his position to enrich himself, the billionaire president said his earnings were placed in blind trusts to ensure that he could not do so.

"I don't get involved in my personal (finances), we have funds that run my money," Trump said. "I've made a lot of money before I became president, and they invest my money, and I don't talk to them."

Trump also insisted that his wealth was due to his prior career, despite the fact that the earnings were related to crypto ventures launched during his first year back in the White House.

"I don't know if I've had a better career in politics or business, but I had a great career in business, and you know, you saw the cash, and you report the different things," he said.

US removes four Indian firms from sanctions list

WASHINGTON, PTI: The US has delisted four Indian companies from its sanctions list that were accused of supplying advanced technology and equipment for Russia's military-industrial base.

The companies have been removed from the Office of Foreign Assets Control's (OFAC) Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List.

The four companies are Hyderabad-based RRG Engineering Technologies Private Ltd and Lokesh Machines Limited, Ahmedabad-based Galaxy Bearings, and New Delhi-based Shaurya Aeronautics Private Ltd.

The US sanctioned Galaxy Bearings in October 2024, accusing it of exporting dozens of high-priority dual-use items, including roller bearings and roller assemblies, to Russian entities. Shaurya Aeronautics was sanctioned for sending shipments of radar apparatus, radio navigational aid apparatus, radio remote-control apparatus and electrical apparatus to Russia.

Indian-Americans hail US SC ruling on citizenship

WASHINGTON, PTI

Indian-American advocacy groups and lawmakers have welcomed the US Supreme Court ruling that struck down President Donald Trump's executive order restricting birthright citizenship, upholding that nearly all children born on American soil are citizens.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday rejected Trump's bid to end the 150-year-old policy. His executive order aimed to prevent babies born to undocumented immigrants and temporary foreign residents from automatically becoming Americans.

The Supreme Court ruling is a "profound affirmation of who belongs in America", said Chintan Patel, Executive Director of civic organisation Indian American Impact.

"Indian and South Asian immigrant families are among those most directly threatened by Trump's executive order – communities navigating long visa backlogs and uncertain immigration timelines, where children are often born here long before their parents have a clear path to permanence," Patel said. He said the Supreme Court looked at those families and said, "Your children are American. They belong here."

Ajay Jain Bhutoria, a prominent Indian-American community leader, described the judgment as a "monumental victory".

"The Supreme Court's 5-4 ruling protects birthright citizenship for immigrant families who built their lives here. As America prepares for its 250th anniversary, this decision honours our history as a nation strengthened by immigrants," he said.

According to Khanderao Kand, President and Chief of Policy and Strategy of the Foundation for India and Indian Diaspora Studies (FIDS), the Supreme Court's decision provided much-needed certainty for millions of families who have built their lives in America.

"The Indian-American community, now nearly 5.2 million strong, includes more than 1.2 million highly skilled professionals and family members waiting in the employment-based green card backlog for years," he noted.

KARNATAKA POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
CIN : U85110KA1970SGC001919

No.KPCL/2026-27/SE0365 Date: 23.06.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION
Two Cover System

KPCL bid is invited through GOK KPP Platform **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** from reputed travel agencies with adequate experience and financial resource for **"Providing Manpower Services of Data Entry Operators (07) nos. Drivers (01) No. & Attenders (36) Nos. to KPCL Offices at Shakthi Bhavan, Race Course Road & Green Building, Palace Road, Bengaluru on contract basis for a period of 02 years & extendable one more year based on satisfactory performance". EMD Rs.3,94,497/-.** Period of contract: Two Years (24 calendar months), Tender Processing fee (Non-refundable) Rs. As per KPP Portal of Govt. of Karnataka. Last Date for receipt of completed bids. **"As per KPP Portal".**

For further details can aslo be obtained from : **General Manager (Admin. & HR),** KPC Ltd., No.82, Shakthi Bhavan, Race Course Road, Bengaluru-560001. India. Phone: **080-22201820, Fax : 080-22370348.**

US Postal Service to release postage stamp featuring Diwali

WASHINGTON, PTI: The US Postal Service has unveiled a postage stamp commemorating the festival of Diwali, among others, which will be released later this year.

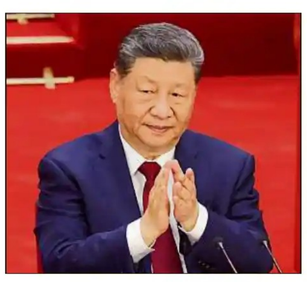
The Diwali stamp features an intricate rangoli pattern created by Sangita Bhutada, a Houston-based artist and photographed by Binay Dixit.

The USPS described rangoli as a vibrant floor pattern traditionally made from materials such as coloured rice powder, chalk and flower petals and believed to bring good luck. According to the USPS, Bhutada is a native of India and a longtime resident of the Houston area who has practiced the ancient folk art of rangoli for nearly 30 years.

The Diwali stamp will be released in October, the USPS said.

Xi tells PLA to speed up modernisation

BEIJING, PTI



Chinese President Xi Jinping attends a ceremony marking the 105th anniversary of the Communist Party of China in Beijing on Wednesday. REUTERS

President Xi Jinping on Wednesday directed the military to accelerate its efforts to achieve world-class standards and protect China's sovereignty and development interests.

Xi, who heads the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), the military and the presidency, made the remarks at a gathering marking the party's 105th founding anniversary, during which he urged the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to speed up its modernisation process.

He called for efforts to achieve the goals set for the military's 100th anniversary in 2027 and elevate the armed forces' capabilities to world-class standards, a target widely interpreted as matching the standards of the US military in weaponry, equipment and training. Xi also called for efforts to resolutely safeguard China's sovereignty, security and development interests and make greater contributions to safeguarding world peace and development, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. He also spoke of China's "unshakable" commitment to unify Taiwan with the Chinese mainland.

Resolving the Taiwan question and realising China's complete reunification is a historic mission and an unshakable commitment for the CPC, he said.

Pakistan, India exchange list of prisoners

ISLAMABAD, PTI: India and Pakistan on Wednesday exchanged lists of prisoners, including fishermen, in each other's custody, the Foreign Office (FO) said.

According to the FO, the two countries exchanged the lists through diplomatic channels in pursuance of the bilateral Agreement on Consular Access. Under the deal, signed on May 21, 2008, both sides are required to exchange these lists on January 1 and July 1 every year.

"Pakistan handed over a list of 250 Indian prisoners in Pakistan (52 civilian prisoners and 198 fishermen) to the Indian High Commission in Islamabad," the FO said. "Simultaneously, the Government of India provided a list of 439 Pakistani or believed-to-be-Pakistani prisoners, including 386 civilian prisoners and 53 fishermen, who are in Indian jails," it added.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
ZILLA PANCHAYATH, BELLARY
Office of the Executive Engineer, P.R.E. Division, Bellary.

No. EE/PRED/BLY/AE-1/Various Heads/2026-27/489
Dt. 30-06-2026.

Tender Notification
(Through KPPP Portal only)

On behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Karnataka tenders are invited from the eligible contractors who have enrolled in Panchayath Raj Engineering Department for 07 works comprising of approved Building works under 2025-26 CMIDP, 2024-25 Minority Board Bhavan and 2025-26 CM Special Grant (Various Community Development) Works through KPPP portal.

Indent No.
8.RDPR/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT27584
9.RDPR/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT27583
10.RDPR/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT27119
11.RDPR/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT27424
12.RDPR/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT27614
13.RDPR/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT27453
14.RDPR/2026-27/BD/WORK_INDENT27613

Contractors are required to submit the tender before 14-07-2026 at 4.30 PM by uploading the relevant documents through KPPP portal website https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in by downloading the formats for submission of tenders from 30-06-2026 to 14-07-2026 at 4.30 PM. Tenders will be opened through KPPP portal on 15-07-2026 at 5.30 PM Any changes in the notification will be published KPPP website only. Accepting/rejection of tenders without assigning reason is reserved. Any details can be obtained in person at the office or through telephone No. 08392-266173.

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Panchayath Raj Engineering Division Ballari
DIPR/Ballari/2026-27/KSMCA/RO No/292

Town Panchayat Thirthahalli – 577432
Web: www.thirthahallitown.mrc.gov.in
Ph: 08181-228221
e-mail: ka.thirthahalli.tp@gmail.com

No.: T.P.T./Tender/C.R./16/2026-27 Date: 19.06.2026

Tender Notice (Through E-Procurement Portal of GoK)

Tender is invited through e-procurement as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act – 1999 and K.T.P.P. Rules-2000 and as per Standard Tender Document KW-3 Rules for below mentioned work in the limits of Town Panchayat Thirthahalli under Town Panchayat Fund Grant for the year 2025-26. Authorised Contractors and Eligible Contractors registered in PWD Civil Department can submit their Tender Bids online through e-Procurement Portal (https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in) up to 06.07.2026, 5.30 PM.

Package No. 1. Indent No.: DMA/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT49753/CALL-2 **Approx. Amount (Rs. In lakhs) :** 80.00 **E.M.D. Amount:** 1,35,500 lakhs **Class of Contractor:** PWD Registered civil Class-III and above

Sd/- (Sri Rathnakar Shetty) President **Sd/-(Smt. Geetha Ramesh) Vice President**
Town Panchayat, Thirthahalli.
Sd/- (Sri Nagaraja D.) Chief Officer
Town Panchayat, Thirthahalli.

DIPR/smg/ksmca/26-27/02/07/449

Biz Bytes

Rupee falls 60p to close at 95.16 against USD

MUMBAI, PTI: The rupee depreciated 60 paise to close at 95.16 against the US dollar on Wednesday, as a strengthening dollar index weighed on emerging market currencies.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened at 94.67 against the American currency and traded in a range of 94.60-95.29 during the session. The rupee finally closed at 95.16, registering a decline of 60 paise from its previous close.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading at 101.42, up 0.23%.

Microsoft to cut under 2.5% of workforce

REUTERS: Microsoft is planning to cut under 2.5% of its workforce in the latest round of layoffs that could be announced as early as next week, Business Insider reported on Tuesday, citing sources.

Reuters could not immediately verify the report.

The layoffs will impact thousands of roles, including sales and consulting, as well as jobs at the Xbox gaming division, the Business Insider report said.

Canara Bank celebrates 121st Foundation Day

BENGALURU, DHNS: Canara Bank, which celebrated its 121st Foundation Day on Wednesday, has emerged as one of the most prominent public sector banks in India. The bank's total global business stood at Rs 28,06,226 crore, comprising global advances of Rs 12,37,548 crore and global deposits of Rs 15,68,678 crore. With a network of 10,097 branches, 11,306 ATMs and Cash Recyclers, serving more than 12 crore customers, it continues to play a pivotal role in financial inclusion and economic growth.

June mfg growth among weakest in 4 years: S&P PMI data

Business optimism at 5-month low; inflation eases

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

India's manufacturing sector growth in June slipped to the second-lowest in four years, dragged by weak demand, as per an industry survey report released by S&P Global on Wednesday.

The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for manufacturing slipped from 55 in May to 54.2 in June, the second-weakest since mid-2022.

"With the exception of March, rates of increase in both output and new orders were the weakest seen in four years," S&P Global said in its monthly survey report.

"Several firms reported an improvement in demand conditions, but others noted subdued client appetite for their products and fierce market competition," it added.

In March, India's manufacturing PMI had slipped to 53.9, which was the worst in four years. A PMI reading above 50.0 signals an expansion in the sector, whereas a value below 50.0 indicates contraction.

Manufacturing activities were severely hit in March due to disruptions caused by the West Asia conflict.

Weak domestic as well as international demand impacted manufacturing activities in June.

"Growth slowed across output, new orders, export orders and employment, with international sales recording their weakest increase since March 2023," said Pranjul Bhandari, Chief India Economist at HSBC.

FACTORY SLOWDOWN
Growth slumps
India's manufacturing PMI falls to 54.2 in June, from 55.0 in May, the second-lowest in four years
Demand weakens
Lower domestic and export demand slows production, new orders, and hiring
Price pressures ease
Input and selling prices increase at a slower pace, signalling lower inflation
Business confidence falls
Manufacturers become less optimistic, reduce raw material purchases, and cut finished goods inventories

"Meanwhile, both the input and output price indices declined, pointing to softer inflation pressures as geopolitical disruptions begin receding," she added.

Concerns over demand and market conditions dampened business sentiment in June. The proportion of firms forecasting output growth in the year ahead halved since May, with a large share of manufacturers signalling neutral expectations. The overall degree of optimism retreated to a five-month low.

The S&P Global report is based on a survey conducted among around 400 manufacturers.

The survey indicated softening in price rise. Both input costs and output charge inflation eased in June.

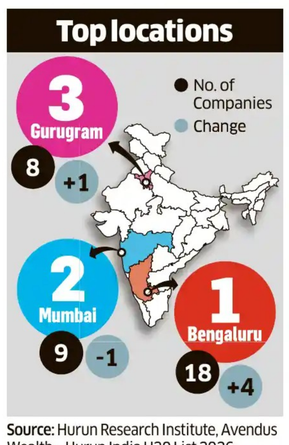
Input buying growth lost momentum in June, receding to its weakest in two-and-half years. Hence, stocks of purchases rose at a softer pace, with a particularly sharp slowdown noted in the capital goods category.

With regards to finished goods inventories, the latest results highlighted an outright fall. The drop was sharpest in six months and ended a two-month period of accumulation. Firms linked the drop to the better alignment of production and stocks with current demand conditions, the rating agency noted in its report.

Bengaluru remains hub for U30-led firms in Hurun list

DeepTech, HardTech account for 1 in 4 entrants this year

BENGALURU, DHNS



Source: Hurun Research Institute, Avendus Wealth - Hurun India U30 List 2026

Bengaluru is home to 18 company headquarters this year, up from 14 in 2025. Mumbai follows with nine headquarters, while Gurugram ranks third with eight in the Hurun U30 List, which recognises 102 young leaders building and scaling businesses.

Avendus Wealth and Hurun India have launched the 2026 edition of the Avendus Wealth — Hurun India Uth Series. The list brings together first-generation founders building ventures valued at $25 million or more, and next-generation leaders driving family-owned businesses valued at $50 million or more. The cumulative valuation of companies represented on the list stands at Rs 2.9 lakh crore, and the average age of the entrants on this year's U30 list is 28.

Also, Bengaluru leads this year's list with 21 entrants, up from just seven in 2025. Karnataka ranks first in the state rankings with 22 entrants, adding 12 new entrepreneurs. Anjali Sardana (23), founder of Pronto and Shreya Mittal (23), founder of Cava Athleisure, are the youngest women featured in this year's U30 cohort. Maharashtra ranks second with 18 entrants, three fewer than last year.

Naman Pushp, 21, from Airbound; Kaivalya Vohra, 23, from Zepto; and Shreya Mittal, 23, from Cava Athleisure are among the top-10 youngest entrepreneurs featured in the U30 list who are based in Bengaluru.

DeepTech and HardTech sectors account for 1 in 4 entrants on this year's list, represented by 27 founders across AI & ML (8), EV & Auto Components (7), SpaceTech (6), Aerospace & Defence (4), and Cybersecurity (2). At just 20 years old, Onkar Singh Batra of Apolink, a SpaceTech startup and Dhravya Shah of Supermemory, an AI startup, are the youngest entrants this year.

Apurva Sahijwani, MD and CEO, Avendus Wealth Management, said, "What makes this cohort particularly interesting is the diversity of entrepreneurial journeys it represents. The list features founders from a wider range of geographies, with 40 hailing from non-metro cities. At the same time, Bengaluru has strengthened its position as a leading hub for young entrepreneurs, with representation increasing threefold over the past year."

Interestingly, one in four entrepreneurs comes from a DeepTech or HardTech venture. AI & ML is one of the most-represented sectors in this year's U30 cohort. "With eight leaders in Artificial Intelligence & Machine Learning alone, this generation is developing technologies that could influence future industry development of global innovation. They are addressing new categories of problems: Companies like Composio, Wispr AI and Klarity are going after entirely new paradigms of how we integrate AI tools, dictate thoughts and process financial data," Anas Rahman Junaid, Founder and Chief Researcher, Hurun India, said.

Technology job openings in July 2026 decline 8% YoY

UMA KANNAN
BENGALURU, DHNS

India's tech sector continues to see weakness in active job openings. Total tech job demand in July stood at 1,06,000 — 8% lower than July 2025. But it's a 14% MoM rise from June 2026. According to specialist staffing firm Xpheno, this signals a short-term recovery in active demand after a sharp crunch in June 2026.

Though IT services hiring recovered MoM to 42,000 active openings, demand remains 22% lower YoY, reflecting continued stress in the sector.

The active tech demand outlook for July 2026 is a significant 11% lower than the high volume last recorded in March 2026. If current market conditions remain stable and supportive of the positive recovery, the new quarter opening in July 2026 could be a welcome quarter for the sector and its talent alike, it said.

"The tech sector took a break from its sustained downward trajectory in active talent demand volume. The volume of active openings in the sector has remained sluggish over the last five quarters. The tech sector's current contribution to the country's total active talent demand has moved up to 49%, continuing in the sub-50% mark for the fourth month in a row," Xpheno Co-founder Kamal Karanth said.

Bengaluru tops with 24,000 openings, a 20% increase MoM. However, it is down 43% YoY.

Meanwhile, overall white-collar hiring in India stayed subdued in June 2026. The foundit Insights Tracker showed a 5% drop from May, and a 9% decline YoY. But GCCs continued to grow, with hiring now leaning heavily toward AI, foundit said. Nearly 2 in 3 new GCC roles created in 2026 — 64% — require AI, data science, or intelligent automation skills. Technology & Software and BFSI together make up 56% of all GCC hiring.

India recorded 2,27,991 GCC hires till June 2026, up 11% from the same period last year. With about 2,120 GCCs operating in the country, foundit projects total GCC hiring will hit 5,10,452 jobs by the year-end, a 12% rise over 2025.

GST kitty rises 11.2% in June on robust import revenues

GYANENDRA KESHRI
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Net revenue collection from Goods and Services Tax (GST) rose by 11.2% to Rs 1.62 lakh crore in June, driven by robust mop-up from imports even as domestic collections remained subdued, as per official data released on Wednesday.

GST revenue from imports surged by 42.2% to Rs 45,370 crore, while net domestic revenue grew by a sluggish 2.6% to Rs 1.17 lakh crore.

Gross revenue collection from GST in June stood at Rs 1.95 lakh crore, 13.9% higher when compared with the same month last year. After adjusting for refunds, the collection stood at Rs 1.62 lakh crore, data released by the Union Finance Ministry showed.

Mahesh Jaising, Partner & Indirect Tax Leader at Deloitte India, said robust increase in GST collections from imports indicate jump in import of raw materials and intermediate goods.

Gross revenue from imports surged by 34.6% YoY to Rs 60,038 crore in June. This accounted for a significant share of the overall GST revenue increase during the month under review.

"Import revenues surged by 34.6% in June and 26.2% YoY, which may reflect on the strong demand for capital goods and raw materials that fuel industrial growth," said Vivek Jalan, Partner, Tax Connect Advisory Services.

GST refunds rose by 29.1% to Rs 32,436 crore during the month.

On a cumulative basis, gross GST collections during the first quarter (April-June) of FY27 rose 8.4% to Rs 6.32 lakh crore, while net GST collections increased 7.1% to Rs 5.40 lakh crore.

Magnet Hospitals plans Rs 224-crore network expansion in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, DHNS: Magnet Hospitals, a Bengaluru-based healthcare brand, on Wednesday announced the launch of a doctor-led hospital network bringing together 150 clinicians to begin operations across eight facilities in the city under a co-ownership model.

Backed by a private investment of Rs 224 crore, of which Rs 115 crore will be contributed by the founder and Rs 109 crore by partners Vijay Prasad and Nanjundaiha, the network aims to expand access to healthcare and strengthen clinical outcomes, said Dinesh Madhavan, Founder and MD, Magnet Hospitals, during the launch on Doctor's Day.

The hospital network also includes 152 clinician co-owners holding equity in the platform, operating as a multi-speciality and superspeciality model, focusing on six programmes: brain and spine, bone and joint, minimal access surgery, mother and child and uro-nephro services. The model aims to address gaps in speciality access, emergency care, maternity care, neonatal intensive care and elderly care through neighbourhood-based healthcare access.

The network currently operates across eight hospitals in Langford Town, Electronic City, Jayanagar, Arakere, Jigani, Jalahalli, Mahalakshmi Layout and Nagarbhavi, and plans to expand to 12 locations.

Govt. of Karnataka
Bangalore Medical College & Research Institute
(An Autonomous Institute of Govt. of Karnataka)
Office of the Director cum Dean, Fort, K.R. Road, Bangalore - 560 002.
Tel: 080-26700810, Telefax: 080-26704342
e-mail: director_bmcri@yahoo.co.in Website : www.bmcri.org

No. BMCRILIB/01/2026-27 Date: 30-06-2026

Notification

Medical Books Exhibition is organized by this Institute for three days i.e., on 08, 09 and 10 of July 2026 for the **Purchase of books for Library and Information Centre, BMCRI and for students under SCSP/TSP Scheme.** Interested suppliers / publishers may register with Senior Librarian, BMCRI to participate in the exhibition **on or before 07-07-2026 by 5.00 pm.** After the due date registration is not allowed.

Sd/- Director cum Dean
BMCRI, Bangalore.

DIPR/CP/YC/1419/2026-27

KARNATAKA POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
(CIN: U40109KA1999SGC025521)
No: CEE/Tr(OP)ZM/SEE(O)/AEE-4/26-27/2528 Date: 30.06.2026

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION (Through KPP Portal Only)

KPTCL invites tender against **Enquiry No. KPTCL/CEE/TZM/SEE(O)/AEE-4/2025-26/616/UGCable/Call-4 dated: 29.06.2026** for Combined package for Design, Manufacture, Supplying and Erection of 11kV UG cables of sizes 1Cx1000Sqmm, 3Cx240Sqmm for providing/replacement of various stations coming under Operations Division KPTCL Hootagalli, Hebbani, Mandya & Chamarajanagara under Transmission (Operations) Zone, KPTCL, Mysuru.

The bids will be received through electronic tendering mode only. The detailed notification regarding subject enquiry in the E-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** on or after **30.06.2026.** Any other details can be had from the office of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/- **Chief Engineer (Electy.), Trans (Operations) Zone, KPTCL, Prasarana Bhavana, FTS Compound, N.R. Mohalla, Mysuru.**

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ವಿದ್ಯುತ್ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಕಂಪನಿ ನಿಯಮಿತ
(ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ರಾಜ್ಯ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಸಂಪೂರ್ಣ ಸ್ವಾಮ್ಯಕ್ಕೆ ಒಳಪಟ್ಟಿದೆ)
(CIN-UO4010KA2002SGC030438)

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

ಶ್ರೀ **ಪ್ರಮೋದ್ ಬಿ. ಎಸ್** ಕಿರಿಯ ಪವರ್‌ಮ್ಯಾನ್, ಕೆ4 ಉಪವಿಭಾಗ ರವರು ಅನಧಿಕೃತ ಗೈರು ಹಾಜರಾಗಿ ನಿಗಮದ ಹಣವನ್ನು ದುರುಪಯೋಗಪಡಿಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಹಾಗು ಗ್ರಾಹಕರು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಿರುವ ದೂರುಗಳ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಬ್ಯಾಡರಹಳ್ಳಿ ಪೊಲೀಸ್ ಠಾಣೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ದಾಖಲಾಗಿರುವ ದೂರುಗಳನ್ನು ಪರಿಶೀಲಿಸಿದಾಗ ಸದರಿಯವರು ಬೆವಿಕಂನ ಅಧೀಕ್ಷಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್, ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್, ಸಹಾಯಕ ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್, ಸಹಾಯಕ ಲೆಕ್ಕಾಧಿಕಾರಿ ಬೆವಿಕಂನ ಇತರೆ ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿಗಳ ಹಾಗೂ ಗಣ್ಯ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿಗಳ ಹೆಸರುಗಳನ್ನು ಅನಾವಶ್ಯಕವಾಗಿ ಬಳಸಿಕೊಂಡು ಗ್ರಾಹಕರಿಗೆ ವಂಚಿಸುತ್ತಿರುವುದು ಕಂಡುಬಂದಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ಸದರಿಯವರನ್ನು ಸೇವೆಯಿಂದ ಅಮಾನತ್ತುಗೊಳಿಸಲಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಹಾಗೂ ಸದರಿಯವರಿಗೆ ಆರೋಪ ಪಟ್ಟಿ, ಇಲಾಖಾ ವಿಚಾರಣೆ, ಅಂತಿಮ ಕರೆ ಪತ್ರಗಳನ್ನು ಜಾರಿಗೊಳಿಸಿದರೂ ಸಹ ಸದರಿಯವರು ಸ್ವೀಕರಿಸಿರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ವಿಭಾಗದ ಸಿಬ್ಬಂದಿ ಖುದ್ದಾಗಿ ಸದರಿಯವರ ಖಾಯಂ ವಿಳಾಸಕ್ಕೆ ಬೇಟಿ ಮಾಡಿ ಅವರ ತಾಯಿಯವರಿಗೆ ನೀಡಿ ಸ್ವೀಕೃತಿ ಪಡೆದಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಸದರಿಯವರು ಈವರೆಗೂ ಕಚೇರಿಗೆ ಹಾಜರಾಗದೇ ಇರುವ ಕಾರಣ, ಕಾರ್ಯನಿರ್ವಾಹಕ ಇಂಜಿನಿಯರ್(ವಿ), ಬೆವಿಕಂ, ಕೆಂಗೇರಿ ವಿಭಾಗ ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಹಾಗೂ ಶಿಸ್ತು ಪ್ರಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ಪತ್ರ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 903–08 ದಿ: 02.06.2026 ರನ್ವಯ ಇಲಾಖಾ ವಿಚಾರಣೆಗೆ ಹಾಜರಾಗತಕ್ಕದ್ದು ತಪ್ಪಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ತಮ್ಮನ್ನು ನಿಗಮದ ಸೇವೆಯಿಂದ ವಜಾಗೊಳಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು ಎಂದು ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸುವುದು.

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ಸಹಿ/–
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ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು.

NORTH WESTERN KARNATAKA ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION HUBLI
Hubli Rural Division, Hubli

No.NWKT/HRD/TR/COMM-2/ 719 Date: 29-06-2026

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION No.04/2026

N.W.K.R.T.C. Hubballi Rural Division invited applications for the selection of Licensees through E-Tender for Glow Sign Bord , Hoardings & Unipole Hoardings at Gokul road bustand , Hosur-Bus stand Hubli, **from: 29 -06-2026.** The tender details & dates are as follows.

E-procurement Details: E-Tender documents can be downloaded from: **Dt: 21-07-2026 up to 17:00** **http://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** Last date for online bid submission: **Dt: 22-07-2026 up to 17:30** E-Tender open date (if no technical errors): **Dt: 24-07-2026 at 11:00**

E-Tender documents can be downloaded from **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** Only certified DSC (Digital Signature Certificate) key holders can apply for E-Tender. For more details applicants may contact the **NWKRTC's Hubballi Rural Division Office, 4th Floor, C.B.T.-Hubli Bus Stand, C.B.T.-Hubballi. Mobile number 7760991652 (Divisional Traffic Officer)**

DIPR/Dharwad/370/Manipal/2026-27

Sd/- Divisional Controller
NWKRTC: Hubli Rural Division

ELECTRIC ROAD

Enthused by Delhi EV policy, Honda evaluates E2W resurgence

HRITHIK KIRAN BAGADE
BENGALURU, DHNS

Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India (HMSI), which paused production of its electric two-wheelers last year, is looking to expand its presence in the segment following the Delhi government's new EV policy, which proposes that only electric two-wheelers be registered from April 2028 onwards. The company is evaluating opportunities to ramp up its electric vehicle business, a senior company executive said.

"... we are continuously strengthening our readiness to respond to evolving market dynamics. Our flexible, multi-pathway strategy enables us to scale technologies in line with demand growth," HMSI President and CEO Tsutsumu Otani told *DH*.

Responding to the Delhi government's recent order, he said, "We welcome the direction of the EV policy as a positive step towards accelerating sustainable mobility. We are closely monitoring how demand evolves alongside ecosystem development and are committed to responding proactively."

The Delhi EV Policy 2026 marks a decisive shift from incentivising electric vehicles to mandating adoption, aimed at reducing air pollution and accelerating transport decarbonisation.

However, Honda said it does not see an immediate need to alter its manufacturing approach despite the policy shift.

Honda, last year, paused production of its first electric two-wheelers — Activa e and QC1 — in India amid sluggish sales, in a market already dominated by both legacy and emerging EV-focused competitors. Meanwhile, the Japanese company has a strong portfolio in India, with models such as the Activa standing out as a long-time leader in the scooter segment.

While the new policy is being viewed by some experts as a template for other states, industry observers say it could eventually force OEMs to revisit their EV roadmaps. Otani, however, maintained that such policy shifts will influence long-term adoption more than immediate demand changes.

"Electric mobility remains a key pillar of Honda's long-term vision. We see strong potential for EV adoption as the ecosystem matures, and we continue to explore opportunities to expand our EV portfolio in India. Our approach is focused on delivering practical, scalable, and customer-centric solutions," Otani stated, hinting at the company's continued EV focus.

According to him, wider adoption of similar policies across states could accelerate electrification further.

"We are well-positioned to adapt through our balanced portfolio strategy and will align our production and market approach accordingly," he said, signalling the company's multi-powertrain approach. "The transition to cleaner mobility will be driven by multiple technologies, and we aim to play an active role by leveraging our strengths across ICE, electrification, and alternate fuels. Our focus is on delivering value-driven mobility solutions that meet diverse customer needs."

> We are well-positioned to adapt through our balanced portfolio strategy and will align our production and market approach accordingly.
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> **Tsutsumu Otani,** President and CEO, Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India

NCLAT revives IL&FS plea in Rs 1,080-cr transactions

NEW DELHI, PTI: Appellate tribunal NCLAT has revived the plea of debt-ridden Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) seeking examination of six alleged circuitous lending transactions aggregating Rs 1,080 crore.

The appellate tribunal set aside a previous order passed by the Mumbai Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT). The tribunal said the NCLT "erred" in its order and misconstrued its earlier directions, failing to examine the merits of allegations that the transactions were designed to circumvent regulatory restrictions.

The two-member NCLAT bench observed that the NCLT had misconstrued its earlier order passed on January 16, 2025, by concluding that transactions could be collapsed only when all parties had mutually agreed.

The dispute relates to six transactions worth about Rs 1,080 crore involving IL&FS Financial Services Ltd (IFIN), SREI Infrastructure Finance Ltd (SIFL) and their group entities. These transactions were structured through SREI group entities and ultimately routed to IL&FS group companies, allegedly to circumvent RBI restrictions on group exposure.

A town seasoned by chilli

A view of Byadagi APMC, home to Asia's largest dry chilli market. PHOTOS/MALATESH ICHANGI

From growers and merchants to manual sorters, generations have built their lives around the crop that made Byadagi a household name, writes Santosh Jigalikoppa

Every morning, hundreds of trucks loaded with dried red chillies roll into the sprawling market yard at Byadagi in Haveri district. Within hours, traders gather around neatly arranged heaps of crimson pods, auctioneers call out bids, male labourers haul sacks from one shop to another and women patiently remove chilli stalks by hand. By afternoon, the produce begins its journey to spice companies, exporters and kitchens across India and abroad.

About 18 km from Haveri town, Byadagi is home to what is regarded as Asia's largest dry chilli market. For generations, the town has built its identity around the chilli trade, sustaining farmers, traders, commission agents, labourers, transporters, spice manufacturers and thousands of other people.

Inside the market, rows of Byadagi Dabbi, Byadagi Kaddi and Guntur chilli varieties await auction. Buyers move from heap to heap, rubbing pods between their fingers, examining colour, size and texture before placing bids. The plump Byadagi Dabbi variety often commands the highest prices.

Byadagi chilli, valued for its brilliant red colour, distinctive aroma and crinkly appearance, has two main local varieties. Byadagi Dabbi is short and plump, with more seeds and a richer colour, making it ideal for masala blends and oleoresin extraction. Byadagi Kaddi is longer and more slender, less pungent but capable of producing an equally vibrant natural red colour.

The chilli's oleoresin, a natural colouring extract, is used in processed foods, sauces and spice blends, besides finding applications in pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, including lipstick and nail polish.

The market size

Although the market derives its name from the famous local chilli, various varieties of chillis now arrive from Ballari, Raichur, Bagalkot, Belagavi, Vijayapura, Yadgir and Vijayanagara districts, besides Haveri, Gadag and Dharwad.

Farmers from Kurnool and Adoni in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh also bring their produce here, drawn by the market's reputation for transparent auctions and prompt payments.

According to horticulture officials, Haveri district was once among the largest suppliers of red chillies to the Byadagi market. Over the past decade, however, many farmers have shifted to maize because of labour shortages and rising cultivation costs. Even so, Byadagi has retained its position as one of India's foremost chilli trading centres.

The scale of business reflects that status. During 2025-26, the Byadagi Agriculture Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) recorded transactions worth Rs 3,070 crore and generated Rs 18.42 crore in market cess. Despite periodic price crashes and crop losses, annual trade has consistently exceeded Rs 2,000 crore in recent years.

Outside almost every trading shop, groups of women sit patiently removing chilli stalks one by one. Farmers usually bring dried chillies with their stalks intact, but stalkless chillies fetch better prices. Paid around Rs 10 a kilogram, many women earn between Rs 300 and Rs 500 a day, while others carry sacks home to complete the work.

"I have been removing chilli stalks since I was 23," says Girijavva, now 55. "The income helped me educate my three children."

Years of experience have made her an expert. "Many buyers ask me which variety they should purchase. I can tell them what colour and flavour each one will give," she says with confidence.

Women remove chilli stalks at the market.

The market roots

The story of the Byadagi chilli, however, began long before the present-day market took shape.

Exactly when chilli cultivation began around Byadagi remains uncertain, but historians trace it back to the early 19th century, when Byadagi served as a district headquarters under British rule. The region's black soil, semi-arid climate and location between Karnataka's Malnad and plains proved suitable for the crop.

Cultivation is believed to have first taken root around Hirekerur and Rattihalli before spreading across neighbouring taluks. Farmers who had traditionally cultivated paddy and other crops gradually recognised chilli's commercial value. As production expanded, Byadagi's location along an important transport route helped it emerge as the principal trading centre. By the middle of the 20th century, it had grown into one of India's largest dry chilli markets, and the town's name had become synonymous with the crop itself.

Today, Byadagi chilli enjoys a reputation far beyond Karnataka. It received Geographical Indication (GI) status in 2011, becoming one of 16 Indian chilli varieties to earn the recognition. The GI-tagged chilli grown in the region is exported to countries such as the United States, Russia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Sri Lanka.

A decade later, India Post issued commemorative envelopes featuring the famous chilli, acknowledging the crop that transformed a small Karnataka town into an internationally recognised trading hub. For some farmers, the relationship with the crop is emotional.

"Growing chilli is like a tradition for us," says Mallikarjun, a cultivator from Rattihalli taluk. "Some years bring losses, but many others have given us good returns. We rotate crops occasionally, but chilli remains our main crop because the Byadagi market offers good prices."

Reputation matters

For traders, consistency is what keeps them returning.

"There is enormous demand for Byadagi chilli powder in Maharashtra," says Arvind Gagammali, a spice trader from Sangli who visits the market every month. "We source our chillies from Byadagi and grind them ourselves because the quality helps us retain customers. If we switch to another variety, customers notice the difference immediately. Its colour and flavour are difficult to match."

That reputation, traders say, rests as much on trust as on the chilli itself.

"The market follows an e-tendering system, and farmers receive payment on the same day their produce is sold," says Adarsh D B, Secretary of the Byadagi APMC. "Transparent auctions and prompt payments have earned farmers' confidence over the years."

Sureshgoudra Patil, president of the Byadagi Traders' Association, says buyers from across India and overseas continue to participate because they know they will find quality produce backed by reliable business practices.

Far beyond the auction yard, the chilli trade fuels the entire local economy. Every market day brings a wave of farmers, traders, and transporters, which translates to booming business for nearby grocers, roadside eateries, hotels, and auto-rickshaw drivers.

For visitors, Byadagi may be the place to buy Karnataka's famous red chillies. For the town, however, the crop is far more than a culinary ingredient. It is the foundation of an economy and the reason a small town has earned a permanent place on the spice map of the world.

(Translated from Kannada by Divyashri Mudakavi)

FEEDBACK
Send your ideas and comments to:
spectrum@deccanherald.co.in

A rare tribute to a Dasara elephant

Chidambara Prasad writes the story of Karnataka's beloved Arjuna, whose life and legacy are commemorated through a memorial in the forests of Hassan

About two kilometres off the main road, along a rough mud track winding through the open stretches of Dabbalikatte forest in Sakaleshpura taluk of Hassan district, a large figure comes into view. As one draws closer, for a fleeting moment, it feels as though a living elephant is standing silently before you.

The life-sized memorial is of Arjuna, the elephant who was once the face of Mysuru Dasara's famed Jamboo Savari.

Built over his burial site, the memorial is enveloped in greenery and silence. But the echoes of ceremonial drums, Arjuna's measured footsteps carrying the Golden Howdah, the applause of thousands, and the rescue operations he led deep inside the state's forests still seem to linger.

Standing 10 feet tall and 13 feet long, the sculpture, crafted by sculptor Dhananjaya, recreates Arjuna with remarkable realism.

While some stop to photograph the sculpture, others fold their hands in quiet reverence. Parents narrate Arjuna's story to their children. But for many, this is more than a resting place of an elephant; a place where memories endure.

Nearly two-and-a-half years have passed since Arjuna's death, but the affection people hold for him remains undiminished.

Arjuna was no ordinary elephant.

Many elephants have carried the Golden Howdah in the history of Mysuru Dasara, but only a handful have become part of the public imagination. Arjuna was one of them.

When Arjuna succeeded Balarama as the elephant chosen to carry the Golden Howdah, he became the face of Mysuru Dasara's Jamboo Savari. Between 2012 and 2019, Arjuna carried the Golden Howdah eight times. His calm, dignified gait during the procession drew the admiration of thousands lining the streets. After offering prayers to Goddess Chamundeshwari, many devotees would also fold their hands before Arjuna.

Beyond the pageantry of Dasara, there was another side to Arjuna's life. In the forests, Arjuna was one of the Forest Department's most trusted Kumki elephants. Kumkis are meticulously trained to perform specialised tasks in wildlife conservation including conflict mitigation. Arjuna played a key role in operations to capture rogue wild elephants and was often at the forefront of missions that demanded immense strength, discipline and trust. Forest officials and mahouts still speak of those operations with admiration.

His life came to a tragic end on December 4, 2023, in the Yeslur forest region of Hassan district. During an operation to capture a wild elephant, Arjuna was fatally injured in a confrontation with a tusker. News of his death left people across Karnataka grieving.

A family bonding

"Arjuna was like a member of our family. He shared a close bond with everyone at home. After we lost him, it felt as though our family had lost a part of itself," Arjuna's mahout Vinu says.

"Arjuna has not died. He is still alive in the hearts of thousands of people like us. We can never forget him," Vinu adds.

Following repeated appeals from the public, the Forest Department built a memorial over Arjuna's burial site. The foundation stone for the memorial was laid in 2024 and was formally inaugurated in May 2026. Today, it is gradually emerging as a place where people visit to pay their respects.

Reaching the place, however, is not easy. Visitors must leave the main road and travel along an unpaved forest track. Signboards are few and visitor amenities remain limited.

Today, Arjuna is remembered not merely as an elephant but as an enduring chapter in the story of Mysuru Dasara — the elephant who carried the Golden Howdah with quiet dignity, served the forests with unwavering resolve and continues to live on in the hearts of thousands.

The memorial dedicated to Arjuna in Dabbalikatte forest of Sakaleshpura taluk in Hassan district. PHOTO/JAGADISH R HORATTI

When history travels by post

A new postal honour for the Kodigehalli inscription sends six centuries of Bengaluru's history, science and culture around the world, writes Udaya Kumar P L

Recently, India Post unveiled a Permanent Pictorial Cancellation — a special postmark — honouring the Kodigehalli inscription stone, a weathered granite slab discovered in Kodigehalli. The postmark was released in Virupakshapura, the hamlet mentioned in the inscription and now part of present-day Kodigehalli, linking the region's present to a fragment of its recorded past.

The Kodigehalli inscription is dated 1431 CE. At first glance, it is an ordinary land grant: Prataparaya, son of the general Mangappa Dandanayaka, gifting the village of Virupakshapura to Lord Somadeva of Sakanasamudra (today's Hesaraghatta, where the old shrine survives as the Chandramouleshwara temple), during the reign of the Vijayanagara emperor Devaraya II. However, the locality's name is hidden in the record: Virupakshapura was granted as a *kodige*. Over the centuries, those *kodige* lands around the village grew into, and lent their name to, the locality that Bengaluru knows today as Kodigehalli. And like every gift, it was meant to endure forever. The inscription is crowned with carved images of the sun and moon, while the closing lines of the text seek that the grant stands *candrarka-sthayi*, meaning "as long as the moon and sun endure."

The charm, however, lies in the details. The donor did not merely hand over the land; he specified how its income was to be spent. Twice each day, it was to fund the deity's *anga-ranga-bhoga*, the rituals of adornment and entertainment performed by a dance-drama troupe. The inscription lists them by role: two actors, a dancer, a *maddale* drummer, a sitar player, an *upanga* (wind instrument) player and a *kamsale* performer.

Six centuries later, the temple has been rebuilt and its dance hall has disappeared, but the stone remembers the orchestra that once played there. It remembers its arithmetic too. While tallying the endowment — allocating sixteen-and-a-half coins for some performers and three-and-a-half for the others, making 20 gold *gadyanas* (coins) in all — the scribe wrote those halves not as "1/2" but as a neat "||".

A digital image of the Kodigehalli inscription which mentions the village name 'Virupakshapura'. PHOTO/THE MYTHIC SOCIETY

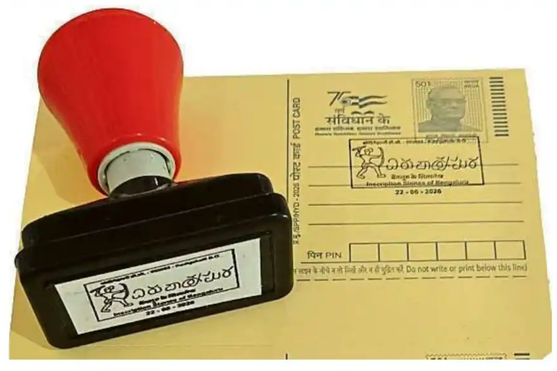
In 15th-century Kannada accounting, a single vertical stroke meant a quarter (*kalu*), two denoted a half (*are or ardha*) and three stood for three-fourths (*mukalu or mukkalu*).

The best, though, is saved for the date. The inscription records the donation using the Indian calendar still followed today — Shaka Varsha 1353, the Virodhikritu Samvatsara, Shravana masa, Bahula Paksha, Amavasya (the new moon), describing it as a *suriya-paraga punya-kala*, the auspicious hour of a solar eclipse. Adding 78 (as the Shaka era commences in 78 CE) to the Shaka Varsha converts the date to August 8, 1431.

This is also the earliest known inscription found in the Bengaluru region to record an astronomical event.

The same eclipse was noted down, hundreds of kilometres away in Kerala, by astronomer Parameshvara, who incorporated a lifetime of eclipse observations into a reformed system of astronomy called the Drgganita, completed in 1431. Remarkably, when corrected for the longitude difference between the two regions, his recorded timing of the eclipse's end is barely a minute off NASA's modern astronomical calculations. A village grant in Kodigehalli and a scholar in distant Alathur (now, Alathiyur), both looking up at the same darkened sun.

The inscription even tidies up our geography. It places Yelahanka *kelage* — "below" — Shivanasamudra; and since "down" once meant east, Yelahanka indeed lies east of Hesaraghatta. It also maps a vanished landscape: a tank called Devasamudra Hiriyakere, now entirely buried beneath RMV 2nd Stage.



The India Post's Permanent Pictorial Cancellation and its impression on a postcard, released honouring the Kodigehalli inscription stone. PHOTO/JAGANATH MANI

A herostone

The 1431 inscription is not the only feature on the postmark. It also has a small figure beside the lettering. It is a *viragal*, a herostone, from the same village depicting a warrior in a braced, wide-legged stance, bow drawn, astride a fallen foe. Two such herostones survive here, carved in the 15th or 16th century. This one bears no inscription, so the warrior's name is lost. First documented in 1905 by epigraphist B L Rice in *Epigraphia Carnatica*, the inscription stood exposed for over a century before it was moved to safety. Bengaluru once had about 175 such inscription stones, of which around 110 survive today, the rest lost to road widening, construction and neglect.

The Kodigehalli hero stone, whose archer is sketched on the postmark. PHOTO/THE MYTHIC SOCIETY

A postmark cannot save a stone. But it can do the next best thing: send its story out into the world, one postcard at a time.

(The author is Honorary Project Director, The Mythic Society, Bengaluru)

TEAMS: 48 VENUES: 16 TOURNAMENT SPAN: 39 DAYS

Mbappe uncorks Champagne show as France sweep aside Sweden

Star striker's brace takes his tally to 18 WC goals, one shy of Messi

EAST RUTHERFORD (USA). REUTERS

France uncorked a Champagne performance on Tuesday to sweep Sweden aside 3-0 with a display of attacking verve and precision and book their place in the World Cup last 16. The scoreline flattered Sweden. France's flamboyant attack might have reached double figures were it not for the woodwork and a series of near-misses measured in millimetres.

Paraguay lie in wait, and the exhilarating football France produced here will do little to help the South Americans sleep before their last-16 meeting. At the heart of it all was French captain and talisman Kylian Mbappe. From the start it had been clear he was a man on a mission.

Mbappe's two goals lifted his World Cup finals tally to 18, one behind Lionel Messi on the all-time list. Remarkably, those goals have come in just 18 matches, with his double here taking him to six for the tournament.

By the final whistle Sweden looked less like beaten men, more like beaten-up men, after 90 minutes hauling themselves round the New York-New Jersey pitch trying to keep up with the precise French passing.

The temperature on the pitch felt even hotter than the 32 degrees Celsius (90 degrees Fahrenheit) officially recorded in East Rutherford, but for Sweden it might as well have been the surface of the sun as they visibly wilted under a relentless French onslaught.

Mbappe was at the centre of everything. He had a long range shot saved in the 16th minute and had the ball in the net four minutes later. The effort was ruled out for offside, but Sweden had been warned.

France	Sweden
3	0

The match was scoreless by the time the packed stadium roundly booed the hydration break, as has become customary among soccer fans angered by the effective introduction of four quarters to a game traditionally separated by two halves. For once, though, nobody could doubt the justification as the haggard Swedes looked out on their feet.

The jeering fans were swiftly distracted by a deafening rendition of Jon Bon Jovi's "Livin' on a Prayer" before the match resumed but there was to be no divine intervention for the Scandinavians.

Mbappe rattled the post just after the half-hour as he inched ever closer and finally broke the deadlock on 45 minutes when, from a pass by Ousmane Dembele, he jinked and skipped and slammed a right-foot shot past Jacob Widell Zetterstrom.

The pair have now combined for six goals at World Cup finals, more than any duo in tournament history, moving clear of Germany's Michael Ballack and Miroslav Klose, and Poland's Grzegorz Lato and Andrzej Szarmach.

France's Kylian Mbappe (second from left) scores their opening goal past Sweden goalkeeper Jacob Widell Zetterstrom during their round of 32 match. AP/PTI

France's Kylian Mbappe (right) celebrates with team-mate Michael Olise after scoring against Sweden on Tuesday. REUTERS

Golden Boot

Kylian Mbappe (Fra)
Goals 6 | Assists 2

Lionel Messi (Arg)
Goals 6 | Assists 0

Erling Haaland (Nor)
Goals 5 | Assists 0

Harry Kane (Eng)
Goals 5 | Assists 0

Ousmane Dembele (Fra)
Goals 4 | Assists 2

SCHEDULE

On Thursday

USA vs **Bosnia & Herzegovina** (5:30 am)

On Friday

Spain vs **Austria** (12:30 am)

Portugal vs **Croatia** (4:30 am)

Live on Zee5 & Unite8. All timings in IST

Ronald Koeman (left) and Sebastian Beccacece. REUTERS

WC fallout: Netherlands, Ecuador coaches step down

LOS ANGELES, AFP: Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman said on Tuesday he was stepping down after his team were knocked out of the World Cup by Morocco in the last 32.

Meanwhile, Sebastian Beccacece has also stepped down as coach of Ecuador following World Cup elimination at the hands of co-hosts Mexico.

The Netherlands had been tipped to make a run deep into the tournament but Morocco beat them 3-2 in a penalty shootout after the match in Monterrey on Monday finished 1-1 at the end of extra time.

The Dutch were leading 1-0 in the final minutes of an enthralling match thanks to a Cody Gakpo goal, but they conceded an equaliser deep in stoppage time when Issa Diop scored.

Justin Kluivert, Quinten Timber and Crysencio Summerville all missed their efforts in the shootout.

Mbappe-Deschamps' harmony binding France

EAST RUTHERFORD (USA), REUTERS

France's 1998 World Cup triumph was built on a special bond between coach Aime Jacquet and his on-field lieutenant Didier Deschamps. Twenty-eight years later, Deschamps the coach has built a strikingly similar relationship with Kylian Mbappe, trusting his captain to carry the entire squad with him as Les Bleus chase another World Cup.

When Mbappe opened the scoring in France's 3-0 victory over Sweden in the last 32 on Tuesday, he sprinted straight to the touchline and into the arms of Didier Deschamps, who had returned four days earlier after attending his mother's funeral.

One by one, every France player followed, surrounding their coach in a spontaneous embrace that spoke volumes about the unity coursing through the squad.

At the heart of it all is Mbappe.

France's captain has arrived at this World Cup on a mission. He has scored six goals and set up two more, but his influence stretches far beyond the scoresheet.

While he has been criticised for his supposed individualism at Real Madrid, even being portrayed as a dictator on social media, Mbappe has become a unifying figure for Les Bleus, urging Michael Olise to get his head back into the game.

France's Kylian Mbappe (right) celebrates with coach Didier Deschamps after scoring. AFP

Mbappe puts glory above Messi duel

Kylian Mbappe has been on Lionel Messi's heels as both players break new ground in World Cup scoring, but the Frenchman is more obsessed by lifting the trophy in New York on July 19 than becoming marksman supreme.

The 27-year-old Frenchman netted a double as Les Bleus crushed Sweden 3-0 in the round of 32 on Tuesday to move one shy of Messi's record 19 goals at World Cups and join him on top of the scoring charts in this edition with six.

"I think the goal, as I said, is to go as far as possible — to make it to (the final on) July 19th and come back here," said Mbappe, who scored his 18 goals in 18 games.

Olise, France's creative genius

EAST RUTHERFORD (US), AFP

That France are more than living up to their status as favourites at this World Cup may be down to the goals of captain Kylian Mbappe but also in a large part to the creative genius of Michael Olise.

There is a sense that, after years of prioritising pragmatism over flair, coach Didier Deschamps has decided to hand the keys to his brilliant attacking players as he aims to end his long reign with another World Cup triumph.

That may yet change when it comes to the latter stages and the quality of the opposition increases but France have been irresistible so far with Olise helping raise them to another level.

France's Michael Olise is yet to score this World Cup but has been the creative mind behind France's attacking brilliance. REUTERS

Les Bleus were at their thrilling best in a 3-0 win over Sweden in New Jersey on Tuesday that made it four wins, and 13 goals scored, so far at the tournament as they eased through to a last-16 tie against Paraguay.

Olise has not scored any of those goals, with Mbappe netting two at the MetLife Stadium to move to six in total, and Bradley Barcola getting the other on the day.

Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele has four and Desire Doue one, but Olise's display against Sweden was majestic, as he set up two goals to become this World Cup's leading assist provider.

The Bayern Munich player did almost break his tournament duck with the game still goalless but his breathtaking overhead bicycle kick came back off a post -- even Mbappe was in awe at the execution.

"It was a fantastic bit of skill. Unfortunately, it didn't go in but people come to the stadium to see that kind of thing," Mbappe said.

The exciting version of France that has emerged at the end of Deschamps' 14-year tenure can be traced back to a Nations League quarter-final against Croatia in March last year.

After losing 2-0 away in the first leg, Deschamps decided to remove one of his three defensive midfielders, and add another forward.

Olise, who had made his senior international debut six months earlier off the back of an impressive Olympics, was brought in for the second leg to play in the number 10 role, behind Mbappe.

He scored a superb free-kick, sparking a comeback as France went on to win the tie on penalties.

Now 24, he gradually established himself in the starting line-up, just as he was starring for Bayern.

Spain confront familiar 'goal' problem

LOS ANGELES, REUTERS

Spain march into their World Cup last-32 clash against Austria on the back of an unbeaten run of 34 matches, a defence yet to be breached and an old question still nagging away; what happens when all that possession runs into a locked door?

Luis de la Fuente's European champions face Ralf Rangnick's Austria, who are making their first World Cup knockout appearance in 44 years after finishing runners-up in Group J, with Spain carrying momentum and a mild tactical headache.

The Spaniards topped Group H with two wins and a draw, taking seven points from nine, after Friday's bruising 1-0 win over Uruguay. It was progress, certainly but not perfection.

Spain have looked secure at the back, with goalkeeper Unai Simon having gone 429 minutes without conceding at the World Cup. Yet their opening 0-0 draw against Cape Verde in Atlanta offered an early warning that control alone may not be enough.

Against one of the tournament's debutants, Spain had 74 per cent possession and 27 shots but only seven were on target. Cape Verde sat deep, kept their lines tight and invited Spain to solve a puzzle with precious few gaps. The Spaniards could not.

For Spain, the sight was uncomfortably familiar. Their 2022 World Cup campaign ended on penalties after a 0-0 draw against Morocco, another match in which possession did not bring goals.

With their talented, speedy wingers Lamine Yamal and Nico Williams arriving at the World Cup nursing hamstring injuries sustained in April, De la Fuente started Gavi and Ferran Torres on the flanks against Cape Verde, but the lack of width slowed Spain's circulation and made their attacks predictable.

Nagging injuries to forwards Lamine Yamal (top) and Nico Williams have impacted Spain's attacking force at the World Cup. REUTERS

They attempted 39 crosses in that match and completed only eight as they moved the ball neatly between defence and midfield but struggled to penetrate the final third.

They responded with a convincing 4-0 win over Saudi Arabia but Uruguay brought a different sort of discomfort.

Marcelo Bielsa's side turned that match into a physical examination, leaving Spain with injury concerns over Williams and Yeremy Pino. Williams felt discomfort in his right leg, while Pino suffered a shoulder injury.

Austria are expected to use similar tactics, deploying a low block and daring Spain to break the deadlock.

But they are unlikely to merely admire Spain's passing carousel.

Shootouts: World Cup's cruellest Test

Morocco's Yassine Bounou made crucial saves in knocking out the Netherlands from the World Cup. AP

NEW YORK, AP

The World Cup is in the lose-and-go-home stage of the tournament and the pressure keeps rising with every minute of every match.

The biggest pressure cooker of them all: the penalty kick shootout. Exhausted players and goalkeepers face off in a tense one-on-one confrontation that carries the hopes and dreams of entire nations.

Two of the first four matches in the round of 32 were settled by shootouts: Morocco beat the Netherlands and Paraguay bested Germany.

A miss can mean humiliation. A goalkeeper's save or the final bulge of the ball in the back of the net can bring tears of joy to millions. That kind of pressure can reach "inhumane" levels, almost all of it focused on the penalty takers, said Geir Jordet, a professor at the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences and author of the book, "Pressure: Lessons from the Psychology of the Penalty Shootout.

Expect more shootouts, more pressure, more anxiety.

A record five games at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar were settled by penalty kicks, including the final when Argentina beat France.

"As you go into knockout football, it's something that becomes more prominent in the games," England winger Noni Madueke said. "So like every part of our game, we want to be at the highest level when it comes to that."

TEAMS: 48 VENUES: 16 TOURNAMENT SPAN: 39 DAYS

Incredible Kane rescues England

ATLANTA, AFP

Harry Kane rescued England from a seismic World Cup shock with two late goals to beat the Democratic Republic of Congo 2-1 in Atlanta and secure a place in the last 16.

Aiming to end a 60-year wait to win a major tournament, Thomas Tuchel's men escaped humiliation and one of England's worst-ever World Cup exits thanks to their talismanic captain after Brian Cipenga's early goal gave Congo an early lead.

England	DR Congo
2	1

But the Three Lions will need to improve for the daunting task of facing co-hosts Mexico at the Estadio Azteca in the last 16 on Sunday.

Already England's all-time top goalscorer in the competition, Kane now has 13 World Cup goals and moves onto five for the tournament to remain in the star-studded battle for the Golden Boot.

Defeat ended Congo's fairytale run on their return to the World Cup for the first time in 52 years.

The Leopards had never even won a point or scored a goal at the World Cup until a few weeks ago, but had one of the tournament favourites teetering on the brink of elimination.

Tuchel made two changes from victory over Panama as Declan Rice returned in midfield, while Djed Spence came in at right-back with Reece James and Jarell Quansah both ruled out through injury. The German coach's decision not to select more specialist right-back cover in a 26-man squad will face more scrutiny after Congo took the lead down that flank.

Spence was caught under Chancel Mbemba's cross as the ball fell for Cipenga. The Almeria winger's shot was low and hard but Jordan Pickford should still have kept it out at his near post.

The vast majority of the nearly 70,000 crowd decked out in England red and white were silenced, while Tuchel's players were visibly rattled.

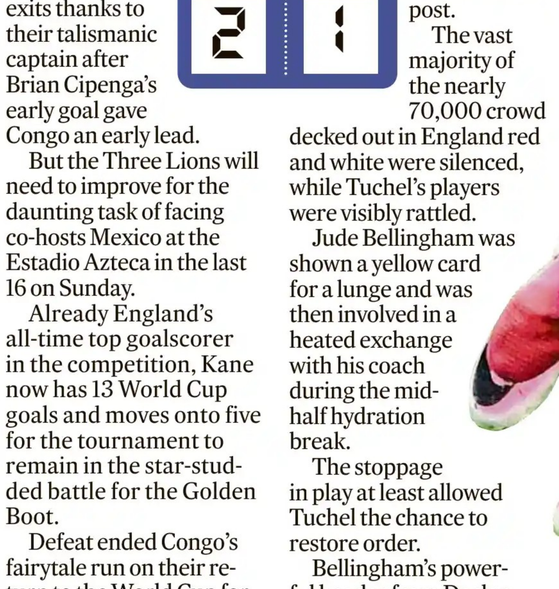
Jude Bellingham was shown a yellow card for a lunge and was then involved in a heated exchange with his coach during the mid-half hydration break.

The stoppage in play at least allowed Tuchel the chance to restore order.

Bellingham's powerful header from Declan Rice's cross finally forced DR Congo 'keeper Lionel Mpasi into action.

Moments later, Marcus Rashford's powerful effort was blocked on the line by London-born Aaron Wan Bissaka after Noni Madueke's jinking run opened up the Congo defence.

Yet it could have been even worse for England at the break. But Kane came to their rescue.



England's Harry Kane (left) celebrates with team-mate Jude Bellingham after scoring a late winner against DR Congo during their last-32 clash on Wednesday. AFP

Raul Jimenez (front) and Julian Quinones scored goals in Mexico's 2-0 win over Ecuador at the Mexico City Stadium on Wednesday. AFP

Mexico end the knockout hoodoo

Raul, Julian goals send Ecuador packing from last-32

MEXICO CITY, AFP

Mexico turned on the style at their iconic Azteca Stadium on Tuesday, brushing Ecuador aside 2-0 to break a 40-year World Cup knockout curse.

The round-of-32 match was delayed for an hour due to stormy weather and when it started the co-hosts flew out of the blocks, mounting wave after wave of attacks.

In a supercharged atmosphere, Julian Quinones gave Mexico a deserved lead midway through the first half with a thunderous strike and then turned provider for Raul Jimenez.

Ecuador desperately needed to wrest back the momentum after the break but struggled to shift through the gears, with the home side remaining largely in control.

Mexico had not won a World Cup knockout game since 1986, when they last hosted the tournament.

Head coach Javier Aguirre, taking charge of the team at a World Cup for the third time over three spells, said he needed a Scotch to celebrate ending decades of heartache.

"I am one of those; I was never able to play the fifth match," he said. "It happened to me in South Korea and it happened to me in South Africa (when he was previously in charge).

Mexico	Ecuador
2	0

"So you have a good group stage and then you get stuck and you cannot move forward... but today there was a huge communion with the people."

As celebrations erupted across the country, the 67-year-old said the Mexican team was a "true family".

"I can tell you that this team deserves what is happening," he said. "This big connection with the fans and playing the World Cup. "Today we stand within the top-16 rank and we have been together for a long time and we still like each other. We are very happy. We are highly focused and we are a true family."

Tuesday's win means Mexico are now unbeaten in 10 World Cup games at the Azteca and will fancy their chances against England or the Democratic Republic of Congo in the round of 16.

Mexico were one of only three teams in the group phase to win all three of their matches, alongside France and Argentina, and did not concede a single goal.

Gilberto Mora, 17, was named in the starting line-up for Mexico, becoming the second-youngest player to start a knockout match at the World Cup finals behind Pele in 1958.

The home team started on the front foot, with Jimenez wasting a glorious headed chance in the seventh minute and Mora flashing just wide.

At the other end, John Yeboah muscled his way into the penalty area in a rare foray forward for Ecuador, clipping the outside of a post.

Mexico took the lead in the 22nd minute when Saudi-based Quinones received the ball from Roberto Alvarado and tore down the left before driving into the box and unleashing an unstoppable shot past goalkeeper Hernan Galindez, raising the roof.

The first hydration break failed to change the script and Mexico doubled their lead after half an hour when Quinones fed Fulham striker Jimenez, who fired into the top corner.

Ecuador coach Sebastian Beccacece made a number of changes after the break in an effort to find a way back into the match.

But Mexico remained the more threatening team, with Cesar Montes twice going close.

Piero Hincapie was sent off in stoppage time after covering his mouth during a confrontation with an opposition player to cap a miserable night for Ecuador.

Mexico will hope the Azteca, which hosted the World Cup final in 1970 and 1986, works its magic again in the last 16 on Sunday.

From the quarterfinals onwards, all the matches at the World Cup will be taking place in the United States.

Ronaldo, Modric look to defy Father Time

ATLANTA, AFP

Cristiano Ronaldo and Luka Modric will make history when two outfield players aged over 40 face off for the first time in a World Cup as Portugal take on Croatia in Friday's last-32 clash.

But both men are facing questions over whether their status as national heroes is now more of a burden than a boost to their countries' hopes of progressing far in the competition.

Prior to this tournament, only Cameroon's Roger Milla had played in a World Cup as an outfield player after turning 40.

Ronaldo and Modric, who won four Champions Leagues in six seasons together at Real Madrid, have long defied Father Time but have shown their age in what will almost certainly be their final flourish on the global stage.

At 41, Ronaldo defiantly screamed "I'm back" after netting twice against Uzbekistan as he became the first player to ever score at six World Cups.

Yet either side of a 5-0 romp over a team ranked 60th in the world, Portugal failed to beat the Democratic Republic of Congo and Colombia and fell into a tougher section of the draw as a result.

"It's already 23 years I've been a professional and whenever things don't go well it's 'Cristiano, he's finished, he's old'," Ronaldo said earlier in the tournament.

The forward played every minute of the group stages and outgoing Portugal boss Roberto Martinez shows no sign of taking the bold call to sit the five-time Ballon d'Or winner on the bench.

"There is not an issue physically or mentally for Cristiano in today's game to play the 90 minutes," Martinez said after Ronaldo managed just two touches in the Colombia box.

After a slow start to the World Cup four years ago, Ronaldo was eventually dropped by Fernando Santos in favour of Goncalo Ramos.

The AC Milan striker immediately scored a hat-trick in a 6-1 demolition of Switzerland, but a 1-0 defeat to Morocco in the quarterfinals meant Ronaldo's time out of the side was short-lived and Santos was removed as coach.

The impression that Martinez is wasting a richly talented generation just to protect Ronaldo's ego grows with every pedestrian performance. Portugal's depth of midfield talent meant Paris Saint-Germain's Joao Neves and Bernardo Silva, now of Real Madrid, started on the bench against Colombia.

Yet even with one of the World Cup's strongest midfields behind him, Ronaldo's strikes against Uzbekistan are his only non-penalty goals in his past 14 games at major tournaments.

Modric, 40, similarly showed his age in Croatia's tournament opener, which ended in a 4-2 defeat to England in Dallas.

Caught on his heels, Modric conceded a penalty when chopping down Noni Madueke for England's opening goal and was sacrificed by Zlatko Dalic before the hour mark. Croatia bounced back to celebrate Modric's 200th cap, edging past Panama 1-0.

In doing so, Modric became the fourth man to reach a double century of international appearances, joining Ronaldo. The AC Milan midfielder then provided the assist for Nikola Vlasic's winner as Croatia beat Ghana 2-1.

Finalists in 2018, Croatia also reached the semifinals four years ago.

Modric was the driving force behind those incredible runs for a country of less than four million people.

A likely last-16 meeting with Spain and one final shot at glory awaits the winners in Toronto.

Cristiano Ronaldo (right) of Portugal and Luka Modric of Croatia have been a pale shadow of their glorious past. AFP

Piero Hincapie. REUTERS

Hincapie sent off for covering mouth

MEXICO CITY, AP: Ecuador's Piero Hincapie became the second player to be issued a red card at the World Cup under FIFA's new rule that calls for a player to be sent off for covering their mouth during a confrontational exchange with an opponent.

Hincapie was sent off in the 95th minute of Ecuador's 2-0 loss to Mexico on Tuesday in the round of 32. He was shown the red card following an exchange with Mexico forward Santi Gimenez.

FIFA established the new rule to prevent players from hiding abusive comments to opponents by covering their mouth.

Brar, Suthar set to bolster India A in second game

GALLE, PTI

Manav Suthar made his Test debut against Afghanistan with a seven-wicket haul last month. PTI FILE PHOTO

Rising stars Gurnoor Brar and Manav Suthar are expected to get a look-in in the India A playing eleven when they take on Sri Lanka A in the second four-day match starting here on Thursday.

The first four-day match ended in a draw with opener Sai Sudharsan and skipper Dhruv Jurel scoring centuries. Jammu and Kashmir pacer Auqib Nabi marked his India A debut with a match haul of five wickets, including four in the first innings.

Since this is an exposure tour with an idea of giving every India A player an opportunity, the team management, headed by Hrishikesh Kanitkar, could be ringing in a few changes in order to ensure playing time for every squad member.

Hence, one can expect that Brar, who recently made an impressive debut in the ODI against Afghanistan, will be included as India senior team looks to prepare its second line of pacers ahead of the tour of New Zealand and home series against Australia early next year.

Since Gurnoor is expected to play, Yash Thakur might be asked to sit out.

Similarly, Suthar, who made his Test debut against Afghanistan with a 7-wicket haul, followed by a short and successful county stint for Warwickshire, will also headline the slow bowling attack.

In that case, left-arm spinner Harsh Dubey will be rested. The other two players who didn't get a look-in in the first game are opener Aman Mokhade and leg-spinner Zeeshan Ansari.

To play Ansari, India A team management will need to drop off-spinner Saransh Jain while Mokhade can replace Ayush Pandey, who failed to score a half-century in both India A innings.

However, Ayush could still get another game in case Sai Sudharsan is deemed unfit after he retired hurt in the India A second innings. He didn't take any further part in the second innings and also while fielding.

Kishan pips Abhishek to top T20I charts

DUBAI, PTI: Dashing India wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan has displaced team-mate Abhishek Sharma from the top spot in the latest ICC men's T20I batting rankings released on Wednesday.

The rise to the top for Kishan (876 ranking points) comes on the back of his consistent form at the T20 World Cup at the start of the year, where the flamboyant southpaw compiled 317 runs at a strike rate of almost 200 that included a Player of the Match performance against Pakistan in Colombo.

Abhishek (869 ranking points) had held the top ranking for almost 12 months, with Kishan joining an exclusive group that includes Virat Kohli and Suryakumar Yadav as one of four male players from India to have held the premier position for batters in T20I cricket.

Pakistan's Sahibzada Farhan is a distant third in the list with 848 points.

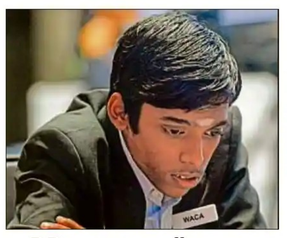
Praggu outclasses top seed Keymer

ZAGREB (CROATIA), PTI

Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa produced an aggressive game to defeat top seed Vincent Keymer of Germany, starting his campaign on a positive note in the Zagreb leg of the Grand Chess Tour here.

After winning the Norway chess classic, Praggnanandhaa went on an attacking spree against Keymer in what will be hailed as a masterclass in the future.

The fury of white pieces was there for everyone to see as the Indian launched his forces right at the opponent's king and bagged two points in a mere 26 moves.



R Praggnanandhaa. FILE PHOTO

In the second round of the day, he drew with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France, who had started the event with a finely crafted victory over World champion D Gukesh.

For Gukesh, the rhythm is still missing, possibly because the youngest ever world champion is already thinking about his forthcoming world championship match with Javokhir Sindarov of Uzbekistan.

The loss to Vachier-Lagreve did not mean much as Gukesh quickly returned to his winning ways at the expense of Ivan Saric of Croatia.

While he was outplayed in the opener, Gukesh showcased his skills while defending an attack against his king in the second round.

Firouzja Alireza of France emerged as the sole leader of the tournament, winning the first two rounds. After beating Saric in the first round Alireza, playing with black, scored a win over Deac Bogdan-Daniel of Romania.

Sciver-Brunt fit for England's semis vs South Africa

LONDON, AFP: England captain Nat Sciver-Brunt has declared herself fit for a Women's T20 World Cup semifinal against South Africa on Thursday.

Sciver-Brunt reinjured her left calf after starring in a win over Ireland a fortnight ago and missed England's remaining group stage matches against Scotland, the West Indies and New Zealand.

Despite her absence, tournament hosts England have made it five wins from five heading into the knockout stages as they seek their first global title since lifting the 2017 50-over World Cup trophy on home soil. Sciver-Brunt said believes she is in the right physical condition for Thursday's crunch game.

Bangalore Phantom FC enter final

BENGALURU, DHNS: Whengbam Dishan Singh and Lumintip Wanniang scored a goal each as Bangalore Phantom FC defeated Young Gems FC 2-0 to storm into the final of the BDFA C Division League Championship on Wednesday.

In the title clash on Saturday, Phantom will take on Gouthama FC.

LOCAL FOOTBALL

Results: BDFA C Division (semi-finals): Bangalore Phantom FC: 2 (Whengbam Dishan Singh 14th, Lumintip Wanniang 45th) bt Young Gems FC: 0.

KSFA D Division: KGF FC: 7 (Deepak 12th, 17th, 24th, Karthi 18th, 29th, 39th, Prajwal 36th) bt Revolts FC: 3 (Vasanth 13th, Mathew 31th, Avinash 37th); Hydra FC w/o Plan C; TFF: 1 (Albert A 8th) bt Mysore United FC: 0; Rush FC: 2 (Anirudh S 19th, Shlok Bhale Rao 40th) bt Ramamurthy Nagar FC: 1 (Thavasi Pandi 45th); Gajendra Nagar FC: 1 (Rakesh MariMuthu 19th) bt FC Real Bengaluru: 0; Premier Sporting FC: 2 (Ariek Thapa 37th, 50+3) bt Bangalore Saints FC: 1 (Sireesh 33rd); Bangalore Panthers FC: 3 (Samarth S Bandekar 10th, 15th, 19th) bt FCA Bangalore: 1 (Emmanvel A 38th).

IN BRIEF

Indian paddlers shock China

▸ India's top-seeded U-19 mixed doubles pair of P.B. Abhinandh and Divyanshi Bhowmick moved to the semifinal after producing a sensational victory over the Chinese combination at the Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships here on Wednesday, reports PTI from Bangkok.

With the emphatic 11-9, 11-6, 11-7 quarterfinal triumph, the Indian pair has not only secured a place in the last four but also assured at least a bronze.

KCA lifts ban on Sreesanth

▸ The Kerala Cricket Association (KCA) on Wednesday lifted the three-year ban it had imposed on former international cricketer S Sreesanth last year for allegedly making defamatory remarks against it, reports PTI from Thiruvananthapuram.

The KCA took the decision to lift the ban in its special general body meeting held during the day. The decision was taken based on the apology submitted by the cricketer, expressing regret for his remarks against the KCA.

Laporta sworn in as Barca prez

▸ Barcelona president Joan Laporta was reelected in March with 68 percent of the vote and on Wednesday was sworn in for the next five years with the Spanish football giants, reports AFP from Barcelona.

Efficacy wins the Stewards Trophy

MYSURU RESULTS

SS Attaollahi-trained Efficacy, ridden by Shreyas Singh, won the Stewards Trophy over 1400m, the main event of the races here on Wednesday.

1. Republican Plate (Div II) 1200M: Peter's Choice (Vishal) 1, V Caviar (Md Talib) 2, Armament (A Mhatre) 3, Super Sexy (V Shinde) 4; Not run: Trump Baby and Glowing Moonlight; WB: 3, Lnk, 4-1/2; T: 1:12.95; TB: Vishal Yadav; Fav: Peter's Choice.

2. Kodlipet Plate 1400M: Iron King (Ashhad Asbar) 1, Walter (Antony Raj) 2, Natural One (Ankit Pal) 3, Sheer Elegance (Sah Farid Ansari) 4; WB: 1-1/2, 3, 1L; T: 1:25.25; TB: Zulquarnain; Fav: Walter.

3. Republican Plate (Div I) 1200M: Lords Grace (R Vaibhav) 1, Hasting Sunrise (Anish Anamo Hangal) 2, I Like Too Hoo Haa (Ashhad Asbar) 3, Anushtubha 4; WB: 1-3/4, 2, 1-1/2L; T: 1:12.44; TB: Gnanashekar.; Fav: I Like Too Hoo Haa.

4. Renowned Plate (Div II) 1200M: Sapphire (Ankit Pal) 1, Falcon Fury (A Mhatre) 2, Mandolin (Lave Kumar 3), Court Jester (Faizan) 4; WB: 1, 3-3/4, 3/4L; T: 1:11.69; TB: Mansoor Khan; Fav: Falcon Fury.

5. Stewards Trophy 1400M: Efficacy (Shreyas Singh) 1, Rise Again (Antony Raj) 2, Gold Kite (B Darshan Antony) 3, Tomorrow Cruise (Lave Kumar) 4; Not run: Santorini; WB: 3, 4-1/4, 2L; T: 1:22.68; TB: SS Attaollahi; Fav: Efficacy.

6. Hiriyur Plate 1600M: Isabelle (Anish Anamo Hangal) 1, Sada (Anil Baandal) 2, Star Of Light (Sah Farid Ansari) 3, King D (Ashhad Asbar) 4; WB: 2-1/2, 3/4, Lnk; T: 1:40.21; TB: Vinesh V Naik; Fav: Sada.

7. Renowned Plate (Div I) 1200M: Silver Quest (V Shinde) 1, Asio (A Mhatre) 2, Mark one (Bharat Mal) 3, Silent Achiever (A R Pradeep) 4; WB: Nose, 1-1/4, 1/2L; T: 1:11.62; TB: KS Mandanna; Fav: Silver Quest.

Mysuru dividends

I race: Rs 23w, 15, 42, 17p; Shp: Rs 154; Thp: Rs 474; Fc: Rs 608; Q: Rs 571; Tri: Rs 2232 & 608.

II race: Rs 30w, 14, 14, 14p; Shp: Rs 21; Thp: Rs 42; Fc: Rs 63; Q: Rs 30; Tri: Rs 242 & 145.

III race: Rs 30w, 13, 18, 12p; Shp: Rs 44; Thp: Rs 57; Fc: Rs 306; Q: Rs 156; Tri: Rs 447 & 110.

IV race: Rs 91w, 20, 10, 54p; Shp: Rs 28; Thp: Rs 129; Fc: Rs 305; Q: Rs 47; Tri: Rs 5451 & 5451.

V race: Rs 16w, 10, 13, 24p; Shp: Rs 33; Thp: Rs 50; Fc: Rs 42; Q: Rs 33; Tri: Rs 341 & 220.

VI race: Rs 42w, 16, 10, 18p; Shp: Rs 29; Thp: Rs 30; Fc: Rs 283; Q: Rs 53; Tri: Rs 608 & 369.

VII race: Rs 18w, 19, 14, 31p; Shp: Rs 48; Thp: Rs 78; Fc: Rs 44; Q: Rs 56; Tri: Rs 333 & 172.

Jackpot: Rs 8871 & 2778. **Mini jackpot:** Rs 9981. **I treble:** Rs 2334. **II treble:** Rs 269.

◆ ON TV ◆

CRICKET

Women's T20 WC: England vs South Africa **(semifinal, 11 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network, JioHotstar**.

Maharaja T20 Trophy: Hubli Tigers vs Mysore Warriors **(2:30 pm)**, Coastal Kings Mangaluru vs Shivamogga Yodhas **(7 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Sony Sports Network**, **FanCode**.

TENNIS

Wimbledon: Round 2 **(3:30 pm)**. **LIVE** on **Star Sports Network**, **JioHotstar**.

TENNIS WIMBLEDON

Gauff huffs and puffs, Sinner fights through

Sabalenka dispatches Kessler; Osaka puts on a show

LONDON, REUTERS

Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka returns during her Wimbledon second-round win over McCartney Kessler of the US on Wednesday. REUTERS

Coco Gauff managed to shrug off her Wimbledon gremlins in the nick of time to avoid another early exit on Wednesday after men's defending champion Jannik Sinner and women's top seed Aryna Sabalenka eased into the third round.

The day after seven-time Wimbledon champion Serena Williams' comeback ended in defeat, the player who took the baton from the American great once again looked vulnerable on the grass but dug in to beat Solana Sierra 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (10-7).

Gauff, the seventh seed, looked on the brink of a third first-round loss at Wimbledon in four years as Argentina's Sierra served for the match at 5-4 in the third set.

But Gauff channelled the warrior spirit of Williams to drag herself back and, after producing a moment of magic at 7-7 in the tie-break, she sealed victory with an ace to set up a third-round clash with fellow American Claire Liu.

A clutch of European Ryder Cup winners watched from the Royal Box on Centre Court as top seed Sinner took on Portugal's Nuno Borges and after the hazards the Italian faced in his five-set win over Serbia's Miomir Kecmanovic in his opener, the 24-year-old kept it straight down the middle to reach round three. World No. 48 Borges had a set point in the second set, but Sinner was relatively untroubled as he raised his game at the pivotal moments for a 7-6(4), 7-6(2), 6-4 victory.

Sabalenka, bidding for her first Wimbledon title, was cruising against American McCartney Kessler but had to fight back from 5-2 down in the second set to win 6-1, 7-6(9).

Kessler had two set points at 5-3 and another two in the tiebreak but four-time Grand Slam champion Sabalenka raised the intensity levels to set up a third-round firefight against big-hitting Latvian Jelena Ostapenko.

Sabalenka gave herself eight out of 10 for her first-round win over Teodora Kostovic and passed another test on Wednesday.

Four-times Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka swapped her first round "Kill Bill" kimono for a more toned down outfit for her second round clash against Russian qualifier Anastasia Gasanova but dazzled with her tennis as she won 6-3, 6-2.

Key second results (prefix denotes seeding): Men's singles: Jenson Brooksby (US) bt 31-Ignacio Buse (Per) 6-2, 6-2, 6-3; Hubert Hurkacz (Pol) bt Sebastian Ofner (Aut) 7-6 (10/8), 6-4, 6-4; 21-Tommy Paul (US) bt Kwon Soon-woo (Kor) 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 6-2; 22-Alejandro Davidovich Fokina (Esp) bt Fabian Marozsan (Hun) 6-3, 6-0, 6-3; Marton Fucsovics (Hun) bt 16-Learner Tien (US) 6-7 (6/8), 6-4, 7-6 (7/4), 6-3; 24-Joao Fonseca (Bra) bt Jesper de Jong (Ned) 6-1, 7-5, 6-4.

Women's singles: 1-Aryna Sabalenka (Blr) bt McCartney Kessler (US) 6-1, 7-6 (11/9); Jelena Ostapenko (Lat) bt Antonia Ruzic (Cro) 6-2, 6-0; 14-Naomi Osaka (Jpn) bt Anastasia Gasanova (Rus) 6-3, 6-2; 10-Karolina Muchova (Cze) bt Zhang Shuai (Chn) 6-3, 6-2; 7-Coco Gauff (US) bt Solana Sierra (Arg) 6-3, 3-6, 7-6 (10/7).

Shreyas, Abhishek slam fifties to bail India out

Men In Blue post a competitive 189/7 against England

CHESTER-LE-STREET (UK), PTI

India's Shreyas Iyer scored a 47-ball 68 against England in the opening T20I at the Riverside Ground. AFP

Abhishek Sharma waltzed to a dynamic 59 and skipper Shreyas Iyer made a composed 68 as India posted a healthy 189 for seven against England in the first T20I here on Wednesday.

India elected to bat after winning the toss, but the beginning was anything but rosy.

The T20I world champions lost Sanju Samson, who drove Saqib Mahmood (3/33) to Tom Banton at point, and Ishan Kishan with just six runs on the board.

Kishan was run out after a mix-up with Abhishek, a mirror image of his dismissal in the second T20I against Ireland at Belfast recently.

At that time, the Indian camp might have briefly revisited their recent batting travails against Ireland in a 0-2 series defeat.

But those fleeting worries were soon eased once Abhishek slipped into his groove, and a bedlam ensued.

Pacers Luke Wood and Mahmood were taken apart spectacularly. Mahmood were carted around for 4, 6, 6 and Shreyas also found a four as India eked 21 runs off the fourth over.

Mahmood tried to unsettle Abhishek with a couple of short-pitched balls, but the left-hander was equal to the task while bringing out two well-timed pulls.

The timing was a big part of the third wicket alliance that produced 82 runs in a little over seven overs, and it was evident in the way Abhishek handled Wood.

The 25-year-old smashed the England quick for a hat-trick of fours as India piled up an impressive 61 for two in the Powerplay.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA

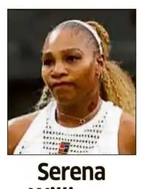
Samson c Banton b Mahmood	1
Abhishek lbw Curran	59
Kishan (run out)	0
Shreyas lbw Mahmood	68
Tilak c Dawson b Mahmood	13
Dube (not out)	42
Rana st Buttler b Rashid	0
Axar (run out)	3
Extras (LB-1, W-2)	3
TOTAL (for 7 wkts, 20 overs)	**189**

Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-6, 3-88, 4-124, 5-165, 6-174, 7-189.

Bowling: Wood 3-0-35-0, Mahmood 4-0-33-3, Dawson 3-0-26-0, Jacks 3-0-30-0, Rashid 4-0-39-1, Curran 3-0-25-1.

Serena's Wimbledon return ends early

LONDON, AFP



Serena Williams

Serena Williams' bid for a fairytale return to Wimbledon was shattered by Australia's Maya Joint as the American legend's first singles match in four years ended in a 6-3, 6-7 (6), 6-3 defeat on Tuesday.

Williams has captured the imagination of the sports world with her sensational comeback, but there was no storybook chapter to add to her astonishing career at the All England Club.

Serena was the second-oldest player to feature in the Wimbledon women's singles in the Open era after Martina Navratilova, who reached the second round aged 47 in 2004.

Doubles bid in doubt

Serena could be forced to pull out of the Wimbledon doubles event after suffering a knee injury in her singles defeat.

She is due to join forces with sister Venus Williams in the women's doubles.

Sancheti retains junior heyball title

BENGALURU, DHNS

Maharashtra's Aarav Sancheti (**in pic**) overcame mid-match blues and a resurgent Mohammed Mustafa of Karnataka, winning 6-4 to retain his junior boys' (U-19) title in the second Heyball National Championships late on Tuesday in Dehradun.

Champion Sancheti, 15, began in whirlwind fashion, jumping to a quick 3-0 lead in the race-to-6 title clash. However, promising 13-year-old Mustafa rallied in splendid style, pulling back two racks to take the fight to his rival.

Sancheti could have gone up 4-2 but missed an easy black to the top right-hand pocket. Mustafa took the offering with glee, making a fine clearance to restore parity. The two cueists then split the next two racks as well.

Playing much more confidently now, Mustafa began to call the shots. He could have gone up 5-4, but missed the final black along the rail. Sancheti, with all his stripes on the table, fought back with a brilliant clearance to go up 5-4.

The script was similar in the tenth rack, with Mustafa doing the front-running before Sancheti clawed his way back. The Karnataka cueist missed the final solid to the centre pocket, allowing Sancheti to clear the three remaining stripes and walk away with the title.

This was the Pune lad's fifth National crown of the year. He had earlier completed a treble at the billiards and snooker Nationals (in January) and the 9-ball pool title in April.

Results: Junior boys: Final: Aarav Sancheti (Mah) bt Mohammed Mustafa (Kar) 6-4. **Third-place playoff:** Aatif Ansari (MP) bt Arnav Sharma (HP) 3-3 (shootout). **Final standings:** Aarav Sancheti (Mah) 1; Mohammed Mustafa (Kar) 2; Aatif Ansari (MP) 3; Arnav Sharma (HP) 4; Karan Sheshadri (Kar) 5; S Mohd Moin (Guj) 6; Hira (Pun) 7; Aagam Gangwal (MP) 8. **Junior girls: Semis:** Natasha Chethan (Kar) bt Aleina Khanna (Del) 4-0; Padmakshee C (TN) bt Gianna Rego (Mah) 3-3 (shootout).

Doubles pair Achutaditya and Arjun make first-round exit

MARKHAM (CANADA), PTI: India's men's doubles pair of Achutaditya Rao Doddavarapu and Pochana Arjun suffered a first round exit from the Canada Open badminton tournament here after losing in straight games here.

The Indian duo went down 9-21, 7-21 to fifth-seeded home pair Kevin Lee and Ty Alexander Lindeman in just 23 minutes in the opening round of the BWF Super 300 event on Tuesday night.

India's campaign will gather pace with fourth seed Kidambi Srikanth opening his men's singles campaign against Malaysia's Paris Olympics bronze medallist Lee Zii Jia.

Aakarshi Kashyap, Devika Sihag, Anmol Kharb, Tharun Mannepalli, Saneeth Dayanand and Tanya Hemanth will also begin their respective campaigns.

Bengaluru hold nerve in a thriller

BENGALURU, DHNS

Rohan Patil's 38-ball 64 took Bengaluru Blasters to an imposing total of 203/7.

Bengaluru Blasters withstood a spirited fightback from Hubli Tigers to register a thrilling two-run victory in the DACSS Maharaja Trophy KSCA T20 tournament in Hubballi on Wednesday.

Chasing 204 for victory, the Tigers were buoyed through crucial contributions from Aneeshwar Gautam (34 off 23 balls), Shivkumar Rakshith (41, 30b) and a blistering 60 off just 22 balls from Manvanth Kumar.

Abhinav Manohar also chipped in with 21 off 15 deliveries as the Tigers took the chase down to the final ball. Needing five runs off the last delivery, Tigers could only manage two to suffer a heartbreaking defeat.

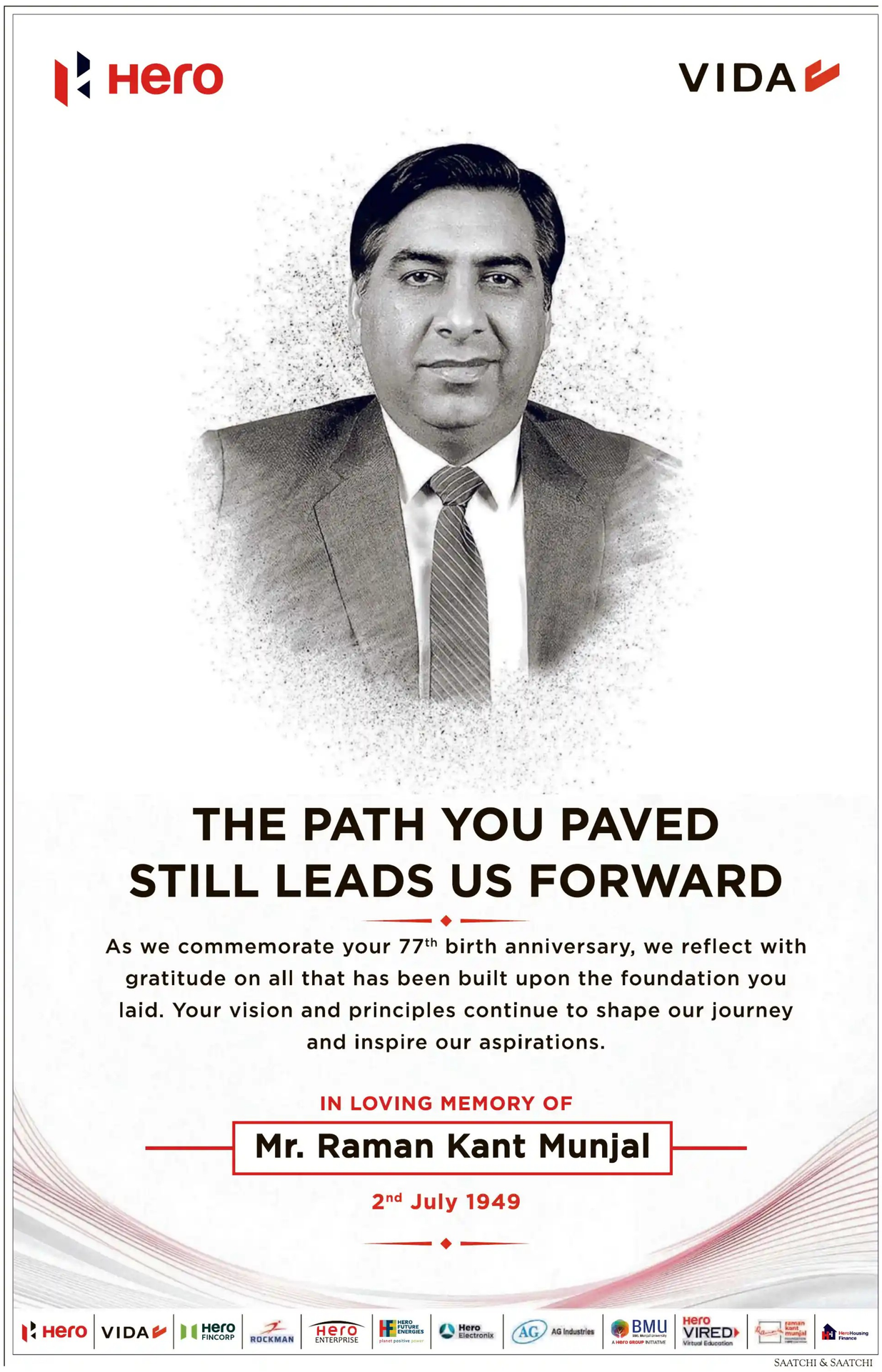
The victory was Blasters' sixth in seven matches, taking them to 12 points and strengthening their position at the top of the standings. Tigers, meanwhile, suffered their third defeat of the campaign.

Earlier, Blasters posted 203/7 after half-centuries from Rohan Patil (64, 38b) and Praveen Dubey (51, 28b). The pair played key roles in building the innings after Rohan and Samit Dravid (32, 23b) had added 70 runs for the second wicket.

Rohan then shared a valuable 51-run partnership with Praveen Dubey to keep the momentum going before Shivraj chipped in with an express knock of 23 runs in just seven balls towards the end of the innings.

Vaibhav Sharma (3/38) and Abhishek Ahlawat (2/39) were the pick of the Hubli Tigers bowling attack.

Brief scores: Bengaluru Blasters: 203/7 in 20 overs (Rohan Patil 64, Samit Dravid 32, Praveen Dubey 51; Vaibhav Sharma 3-38, Abhishek Ahlawat 2-39) bt Hubli Tigers: 201/7 in 20 overs (Hardik Raj 25, Aneeshwar Gautam 34, Shivkumar Rakshith 41, Manvanth Kumar 60; Vidwath Kaverappa 2-55, Nischith Rao 3-27) by 2 runs.


Hero
VIDA
THE PATH YOU PAVED
STILL LEADS US FORWARD
As we commemorate your 77th birth anniversary, we reflect with gratitude on all that has been built upon the foundation you laid. Your vision and principles continue to shape our journey and inspire our aspirations.
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